



TLM Daily Devotions

October 2018





Jesus was Amazed, let us also amaze Him

It is mentioned only twice in New Testament that Jesus was amazed. Mark 6:6 says that He was amazed due to lack of faith in his own home town-Nazareth. *Luke 7:9* say that *He was amazed at him* (centurion) and said” *I have not found such great faith even in Israel*”.

We will concentrate now on the great faith of Centurion on Jesus which surprised Jesus. Let us also see some of the main features of his character and personality.

- He was centurion; this means that he was not an ordinary man: Centurions were the back bone of Roman army. Whenever they are spoken in the New Testament, they are spoken with high respect. They must have very special qualities to become centurion. The centurion must have been a man amongst men otherwise he would never have held the post of which was his.
- He had completely unusual attitude toward his servant: He loved this servant so much that he would go to any trouble to save him. Roman laws at that time define servant/slave as a living tool. He had no rights; the master could ill treat him or kill him if he chooses. Normally the servants were thrown out to die when they are sick and old. The attitude of this centurion was very different towards this servant when he was sick. He was very kind and caring toward this servant. He wanted him to get better in any cost.
- He was clearly a deeply religious man: He wan sincerely religious man. A man needs to be more than superficial interested before he will go to the length of building a synagogue.
- He has extremely unusual attitude to the Jews: If the Jews despise the gentiles, the gentiles hated the Jews. The Romans called the Jews a filthy race; they spoke of Judaism as barbarous superstition. But the whole atmosphere of this story implies a close bond of friendship between this centurion and the Jews.
- He was a humble man: He knew quite well that a strict Jew was forbidden by the law to enter the house of a gentile (ACTS 10:28); just as he was forbidden to allow a gentile into his house or have any communication with him. He would not even come to Jesus himself. He persuaded his Jewish friends to approach him. This man who was accustomed to command had an amazing humility in the presence of true greatness.
- He was a man of faith: His faith was based on the soundest argument. He argued from the here and now to the there and then. He argued from his own experience to God. If his authority produced the results it did, how much more must that of Jesus? He came with that perfect confidence which looks up and says “Lord, I know that you can do this.”

Let us see these qualities of this Centurion which surprised Jesus and examine our life carefully. We have to make every effort and pray to God that we must have these qualities in our own life also. The most important one in FAITH and we must develop faith on Jesus like centurion, especially when things are going wrong or adverse, Can we still have faith in Jesus?



God of Grace & of A Second Chance! – 1.

Have you ever needed a 2nd chance? Do you need one today?

- What's going on in your life now?
- What is keeping you from running at your full potential for God?
- You know you are running away from God - & God has been speaking to you about your service to Him *Jonah 1.1-3*

Life got between Jonah & God! In Jonah' case it was:

- His choice,
- His attitude towards others,
- A misunderstanding of God's ways
- Most of all his desire to do what he thought was right, which was totally wrong!

His disobedience affected a whole boat load of people

- Jonah & his disobedience put their lives in danger & even a loss of a boat to the boat owner

The Lord was after Jonah!

- See vs4, 17 - The Lord will always get His man!
- When God saves you He has a job for each & everyone of us to do – so often we run away from it
- Never forget: You can't run from God!

In the *great fish* - Jonah comes to his senses! *Jonah 2.1-2*

Jonah now puts God between life & himself!

- He gets his life's priorities right!
- ~ Me – God – life
- ~ Not: me – life – God

Thank God - He's the God of a second chance!

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.



God of Grace & of A Second Chance! – 2.

Jonah 2.9 One sentence of repentance, one song of thanksgiving, one decision to return to his vow, one statement: *I will make good*

- ~ Got God's attention
- ~ God spoke to the great fish – 'Get Jonah to dry land & vomit him out!'
- ~ One act, one song, one decision & one statement & he was back on course with God!

Jonah 3.1-3 One act of repentance, one decision of obedience, turned the fate of a city & its people around ~ This act released the compassion of God upon people, animals & a city!

This act of compassion exposed the hidden anger, the attitude towards others, the misunderstanding of God's ways in Jonah's heart

Mark 7:20-23 & Jeremiah 17:9 *The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?*

Your heart will lie to you, it will cheat you, will tell you; you are right when you are totally wrong!

- ~ It did that to Jonah, it has done it to others & your heart will do it to you!

The result of what was in Jonah's heart was exposed by the words he spoke & what he did because of God's compassionate act is seen in this:

Jonah 4.1-3 A question:

- While Jonah was in Nineveh he was going through the right actions, **BUT** his heart was full of deceit
- The sad thing was he thought he was fooling God!
- Jonah was angry at the character of God
- Thank God He is a: *gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abounding in love, a God who relents from sending calamity!!!* God once again asks a question: *"Have you any right to be angry?"*

Jonah storms out on God! Another mistake!

- ~ A deceitful heart is a wicked uncontrollable thing!!
- ~ A heart that is always making excuses is a dangerous angry attitude

Jonah 4.5-8 Jonah thought he was so right

- ~ Your heart will lie to you, it will cheat you, will tell you; you are right when you are totally wrong!
- ~ Look at God's provision!
 - A vine - A worm - A burning wind!
 - From provision, prosperity & peace to pain & persecution & God was doing it!
- ~ A deceitful heart just gets you more & more into trouble!!!

Jonah 4.9 · Do you think Jonah had forgotten he was speaking to God?

- Angry because God exercised His right to be a *gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abounding in love, a God who relents from sending calamity!!!*

The horror is sometimes I forget that I'm dealing with God!

- And end up treating Him as my slave! Do this – do that – I want – I need...

Jonah 4.10 · Jonah you are concerned about things & life – what you've got, what's good for you – meism at its height, arrogance...

Jonah 4.11 · Jonah; I God am concerned about people!

Jonah's story is a heart story – a subtle story of our hearts exposing us – getting us to dig in so we can go forward

- Calling out to God – I want to do it right

God promises to us: *Ezekiel 11:19 & Jeremiah 24:7 & Jeremiah 31:33-34*

Can we say?

Lord; here is my heart today – help me from myself

Psalm 51:9-11

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The real life/the best life

Acc. to Rick Warren, LIFE is a TRUST - a TRIAL (traumas, temptations, tests, etc) - a TEMPORARY ASSIGNMENT - and hopefully also a TRANSFORMATION! (2Cor.5:17)

John 15:13-15 – “Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends. You are My friends if you do what I command you. No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from My Father I have made known to you.”

1) The best use of life is to love! 2) The best expression of love is time! 3) The best time to love is now!

Jesus loved and saved Peter and Paul (John 3:16; Matth.16; Acts 9).....

Both had a divine encounter with God in their 'AHA-moment'!(Bright Light/H.Sp. insight)

1 Cor.15:9 – “For I am the least of the apostles, unworthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am....”

1 Tim.1:15 – “The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the foremost. But I received mercy.....”

2Pet.3:14ff-“Therefore, beloved...be diligent to be found by Him without spot or blemis and at peace. And count the patience of our Lord as salvation, just as our beloved brother Paul also wrote to you acc. to the wisdom given him. There are some things in his letters that are hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction..... You, therefore, beloved.....take care that you are not carried away with the error of lawless people and lose your own stability. But grow in the grace + knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory forever – Amen.”

Here are a dozen similarities between these two stalwart apostles/believers/Christians/etc.

Both were filled with the H.Sp.

Both performed miracles

Both saw visions

Both preached powerful sermons with courage and conviction to Jew and Gentile

Both suffered for their Faith

Both were imprisoned and miraculously set free

Both healed the sick

Both cast out demons

Both raised the dead

Both declared God's condemnation on false teachers

Both refused worship (only God may be worshipped)

Both died in Rome (.....how do you and I compare?)

May you/I never end up as FALSE CONVERTS (cf Mark 4—the parable of the different soils):-

1) Immediate results, but when TRIBULATIONS/TRIALS/TESTS come immediately fall away!

2) Lack of moisture/Word of God/Q.T., are easily overcome by TEMPTATIONS + fall away!

3) No roots/faith dries up when PERSECUTED, believe only for a limited season!

4) Some receive the Word with gladness, but later DIVERT FROM THE WORD OF GOD!

5) We need to READ/MEDITATE/MEMORIZE/DO the Word of God (Psalm1;Gal.2:20)

Prov.23:26 – “My son, give Me your heart, and let your eyes observe My ways.”

Psalm119:10-“With my whole heart I seek You; let me not wander from Your Word.”

A TRUE CONVERT regularly visits:-

1) REPENTANCE

2) GRATITUDE

3) GOOD WORKS

4) FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

5) FRUIT OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

Let's continue our God-given life in PATIENT ENDURANCE and PRESSING INTO JESUS.

Philp.3:13,14-“But one thing I do , brothers, forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.” Amen.

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



The fragrance of His workshop

If you have a workshop for woodwork or something similar, I wonder whether you have a favourite tool hanging on the rack? A piece of equipment that is your go-to device for fixing or shaping things, an instrument that perhaps tells a story? Maybe even a tool that no longer works properly, but is so much part of your life that you can't bear to part with it – yes, I'm talking to you, men.

My workshop is packed with tools old and new, some inherited from my *Oupa* and many from my Dad. Dad's spokeshave – I broke the blade when it was brand new, before he got a chance to use it; the screwdriver I bought in 1976 to tinker with the carburettor on my Beetle, trying to coax an extra mile or so from the tank; the tenon saw which Elizabeth bought me just after we got married – its blade now blunt and slightly rusted, but 37 years later, I treasure it as much as the first time I used it at Mbuluzi leprosy hospital in Swaziland where we lived on our return from honeymoon – a dog kennel – thank you for asking. Later it helped me build a boat – no surprise there. Clamps, planes, chisels, drills. Elizabeth pleads with me to sort it out, but I know one day I will find a use for each item, now matter how battered it is.

But my favourite tool is my router, a machine that spins a bit that allows you to shape the edge of planks. A series of differently shaped bits produces attractive finishes and turns the cheapest pine plank into something amazing. Dove-tail joints and are one of the many other applications for which you can use it. I've been working with it a lot in recent weeks to help me finish a telescope project. Not quite there yet, but I am happy with the results so far. One of the intriguing aspects of working with a router is trying to relate the shape of the bit to the shape of the edge which it will produce. What did we do before You Tube gave us all those instructional videos?

And I think of the Carpenter from Galilee. Did he have a favourite tool? Did He relish the aroma of the wood as he worked alongside Joseph? I imagine His delight as he coaxed a shape from a freshly sawn plank. He who spoke the world into being, now supporting the family as His hands crafted furniture for the neighbours.

Hands which are still shaping lives. And that is what I'd like to talk to you about today. As I mentioned earlier, router bits take some getting used to. You have to think a little bit out of the box to try to understand what the finished item might look like. A wise worker soon learns to practice on scrap planks before tackling the final project. I suspect that as the Carpenter is at work in your life, it is not always easy to see how things will turn out. He gave us many images of how He shapes our lives, but perhaps the one we know the best is: *"He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful."* [John 15:2]

Thank God that He is not done with us yet! Those rough edges, yes, they have to go. The path to holiness isn't easy. The router bit runs very hot and my favourite bits are the sharpest. By nightfall on Saturday, my hands are numb from the vibration of the router, I'm covered in sawdust and yes, I will have shed a few tears of frustration along the way when vision and execution failed to align, but there is a deep happiness within in me. I'm at peace. My project is taking shape. The day when it all comes together feels deeply satisfying. The shapes you see may not make sense at the moment, but do surrender yourself to Him so that He might complete His work.

Father, I pray for my friends and myself in the Fellowship. I've got rough edges a plenty. It's no fun when you prune us. But rather the Master shape me than my own selfish ambition. You long to straighten the warped plank that is me. And you can't do that if I lie hidden in the woodpile in the corner of the workroom.

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.



Psalm 72

Of Solomon.

- ¹ Endow the king with your justice, O God,
the royal son with your righteousness.
- ² May he judge your people in righteousness,
your afflicted ones with justice.
- ³ May the mountains bring prosperity to the people,
the hills the fruit of righteousness.
- ⁴ May he defend the afflicted among the people
and save the children of the needy;
may he crush the oppressor.
- ⁵ May he endure as long as the sun,
as long as the moon, through all generations.
- ⁶ May he be like rain falling on a mown field,
like showers watering the earth.
- ⁷ In his days may the righteous flourish
and prosperity abound till the moon is no more.
- ⁸ May he rule from sea to sea
and from the River to the ends of the earth.
- ⁹ May the desert tribes bow before him
and his enemies lick the dust.
- ¹⁰ May the kings of Tarshish and of distant shores
bring tribute to him.
May the kings of Sheba and Seba
present him gifts.
- ¹¹ May all kings bow down to him
and all nations serve him.
- ¹² For he will deliver the needy who cry out,
the afflicted who have no one to help.
- ¹³ He will take pity on the weak and the needy
and save the needy from death.
- ¹⁴ He will rescue them from oppression and violence,
for precious is their blood in his sight.
- ¹⁵ Long may he live!
May gold from Sheba be given him.
May people ever pray for him
and bless him all day long.
- ¹⁶ May grain abound throughout the land;
on the tops of the hills may it sway.

May the crops flourish like Lebanon
and thrive like the grass of the field.

¹⁷ May his name endure forever;
may it continue as long as the sun.

Then all nations will be blessed through him,
and they will call him blessed.

¹⁸ Praise be to the LORD God, the God of Israel,
who alone does marvelous deeds.

¹⁹ Praise be to his glorious name forever;
may the whole earth be filled with his glory.
Amen and Amen.

²⁰ This concludes the prayers of David son of Jesse.



Psalm 73

A psalm of Asaph.

- ¹ Surely God is good to Israel,
to those who are pure in heart.
- ² But as for me, my feet had almost slipped;
I had nearly lost my foothold.
- ³ For I envied the arrogant
when I saw the prosperity of the wicked.
- ⁴ They have no struggles;
their bodies are healthy and strong.
- ⁵ They are free from common human burdens;
they are not plagued by human ills.
- ⁶ Therefore pride is their necklace;
they clothe themselves with violence.
- ⁷ From their callous hearts comes iniquity
their evil imaginations have no limits.
- ⁸ They scoff, and speak with malice;
with arrogance they threaten oppression.
- ⁹ Their mouths lay claim to heaven,
and their tongues take possession of the earth.
- ¹⁰ Therefore their people turn to them
and drink up waters in abundance.
- ¹¹ They say, "How would God know?
Does the Most High know anything?"
- ¹² This is what the wicked are like—
always free of care, they go on amassing wealth.
- ¹³ Surely in vain I have kept my heart pure
and have washed my hands in innocence.
- ¹⁴ All day long I have been afflicted,
and every morning brings new punishments.
- ¹⁵ If I had spoken out like that,
I would have betrayed your children.
- ¹⁶ When I tried to understand all this,
it troubled me deeply

¹⁷ till I entered the sanctuary of God;
then I understood their final destiny.

¹⁸ Surely you place them on slippery ground;
you cast them down to ruin.

¹⁹ How suddenly are they destroyed,
completely swept away by terrors!

²⁰ They are like a dream when one awakes;
when you arise, Lord,
you will despise them as fantasies.

²¹ When my heart was grieved
and my spirit embittered,

²² I was senseless and ignorant;
I was a brute beast before you.

²³ Yet I am always with you;
you hold me by my right hand.

²⁴ You guide me with your counsel,
and afterward you will take me into glory.

²⁵ Whom have I in heaven but you?
And earth has nothing I desire besides you.

²⁶ My flesh and my heart may fail,
but God is the strength of my heart
and my portion forever.

²⁷ Those who are far from you will perish;
you destroy all who are unfaithful to you.

²⁸ But as for me, it is good to be near God.
I have made the Sovereign LORD my refuge;
I will tell of all your deeds.



The empowering Spirit

Lila is from Nepal. Lila was 10 when she started to develop clawing in her hand as a result of leprosy. Lila and her family did originally face some discrimination, but now there is no longer discrimination. Lila joined a self help group, and was able to get a goat. With the funds from the goat, and selling chicken eggs Lila enrolled herself in university. She now also spends several hours a day leading a Leprosy Mission Cooperative for people affected by leprosy and disability. Lila's story reminds me of the story of the nameless girl in *2 Kings Chapter 5*.

This is also the story, of Naaman, the Aramean warlord affected by leprosy.¹ On the orders of his king, he had been raiding Israel, God's people. He had taken slaves, plunder and destroyed communities. One of those slaves, a young girl, had ended up in his household. This young girl, no more than 13, would have had every reason to hate him. Instead she helps him. Mark Greene makes the point, "She is isolated from other believers, wrenched from family and friends and has nothing but a life of slavery to look forward to...[but] she is not looking to punish her enemy, but to bless him" (Greene, *Fruitfulness on the Frontline*).

Wow! What I love about this story is that it turns the world upside down. There are four powerful men in this story: The King of Aram, The King of Israel, Naaman, and Elisha the prophet. But the people who put Naaman on the journey to healing are: the slave girl, Naaman's wife, and some of Naaman's other slaves. In the world Naaman inhabited this is the opposite order of things! Where kings cannot succeed, how can slaves? But they do! In fact the only powerful person who can help is Elisha. This is because he, unlike the other powerful men, is empowered by the same Spirit who empowers the young slave girl. In John 14 Jesus promises his father will send the Spirit, the Advocate. Rich, poor, young, or old the way to true success is to trust in God. Where God empowers, those on the margins can succeed where kings cannot.

This young girl had every reason to not want to bless Naaman. But God empowered her to love her enemy. Lila had many reasons to not succeed, but empowered by field staff, donors and prayer partners, she has become a champion for people affected by leprosy. She was able to go beyond her circumstances. People affected by leprosy are their own best champions.

We get the opportunity to help empower people like Lila to achieve! What a privilege. These two true stories also show us that whatever our circumstances we can trust in God to help us go beyond them.

Tim Collison – Engagement Coordinator, TLM Australia

¹ Dr. Stanley Browne has a good article on this: *Leprosy in the Bible*. If you would like a PDF please email me engage@leprosymission.org.au



Solitude

Recently I had a long chat with a lady (younger than I am) about when solitude becomes loneliness and how you deal (or cope) with either or both of these. Like me, this lady lives on her own and has done for many years but she sees her life as lonely and gets very upset about this. She goes to church and has also joined many “clubs” in the town but as soon as she shuts her front door she feels lonely and gets caught up in that feeling. Nothing I said seemed to bring her any measure of hope or positive thinking about her situation.

Interesting question and I was confronted with it again a few days later when everything I read seemed to relate to one of these topics. As I thought more about it I turned, to Scripture and inevitably to the book of Psalms. For example *Psalm 122 and verse 9* says *“for the sake of my brothers and friends, I will say, “Peace be within you”.*

One of my favourite hymns is “What a friend we have in Jesus” and I reflected again on the words of that hymn and realised afresh that with Jesus as a friend we need never feel lonely. As I thought about that I thought of the many Christian people who work in lonely situations. Sometimes the situations of our lives, whether it be the place we live, the place we work, Yes, even the place where we worship can stimulate that feeling of loneliness. We have surely all heard it said that sometimes the loneliest place is in the middle of a crowd. Even there, however, God is with us. Jesus, our friend is there for us whether we are in the house alone, or in the middle of a crowded church. Thinking of church I can remember going for several weeks to the same church (for a particular reason) but no one in that church spoke to me and when I shook hands with the minister on the way out, all he said was “good morning”. Are we aware of strangers in our churches?... but that really is another topic.

Yet, looking at the word I have used as a title – solitude, brings different thoughts. Sometimes it is good to spend that time alone with the Lord, and we read of Jesus getting up very early to go out alone to spend time talking with His Father. How good it is to be able to spend time alone with God – to pour out our heart to Him, to listen to Him, to feel His presence. The lady I met considered that would all add to her loneliness rather than bring her any comfort.

Whatever, your situation today, spend time alone with God – tell Him your thoughts, listen to Him, let Him bring His peace into your heart and life. Today, if you are lonely, for whatever reason, remember That hymn *“What a friend we have in Jesus”* – the last line says *“In His arms He’ll take and shield you, you will find a solace there”.*

Remember too that whoever you meet today might be lonely and just need a word of greeting and friendship from you.

My prayer as I write this is that “Today God’s presence will bring peace to you, and to your heart”



“Help, what will I do?”

Read 2 Kings 6:8-17.

Elisha’s servant was understandably frightened when all he could see were the chariots and horses of the enemy army surrounding the city.

Sometimes we can feel like that when things go wrong or circumstances seem to be always against us – medical diagnosis, financial problems, family crises. Sometimes even simple problems seem like insurmountable rocks. We wonder what to do or how to get around the situation. Elisha could see beyond the immediate enemy to the army of the Lord waiting to come to the rescue. He stemmed the fears of the servant with prayer – prayer that God would show him how to deliver them from the imminent danger.

Psalm 125 (verse 2) tells us that *“the Lord surrounds His people both now and for evermore”*. Our lives might change, we might have problems and difficulties but the Lord is always there if we just trust Him – His answer is not always instant, is not always what we want but He is ready to supply what we **need** in any situation.

How many of us can give testimony to the truth of that promise from God and yet... how difficult it is sometimes to commit our problem to God, to lay it at Jesus’ feet and leave the problem or situation with Him. We take it to Him in prayer and then we rise and take it away with us again and continue to look for our own solution.

Sometimes it’s the big things that weigh you down, and other times it the little, everyday frustrations. We need to take encouragement from remembering that we are always surrounded by God’s protective power.

As we go into this day and the days to come I pray that God will give you eyes like those of Elisha to see His watchful protection beyond the immediate problem(s).

Christine Osman, formerly Treasurer of TLMI



'What do you see?'

Moreover the word of the Lord came to me, saying, "Jeremiah, what do you see?" And I said, "I see a branch of an almond tree." Then the Lord said to me, "You have seen well, for I am ready to perform My word." Jeremiah 1:11-12 NKJV

Before God can trust us with responsibilities and for us to be effective in carrying out His divine assignment or mandate on earth, He wants to ensure that we see clearly. It is therefore very important for us to see clearly the vision God is showing us so that we do not get distracted or get discouraged as we attempt to do His will. When God called Prophet Jeremiah He gave him visions in preparation for his calling and asked him 'what do you see?' God wants to be sure that Jeremiah see clearly or correctly therefore his answer to this question is important to God before He can allow the prophet to proceed in the task He assigned for him to carry out. Jeremiah was able to pass the test and God confirm that 'he sees well' and therefore God is ready to perform His word.

For us to have an effective Ministry whether as TLM globally or in any other calling that God is preparing us for, we 'must see well' God's plan, and what God wants to do through us, we must see the way God sees and not the way men see.

Seeing clearly is so important to God as we see in the story of a blind man healed by Jesus in the book of Mark 8:22-25, after performing the miracle of restoring the sight of the man Jesus asked him if he saw anything, the man response was that 'he saw men like tress, walking,' Jesus have to help the man further by putting His hand on his eyes and made him look up, and the man was fully restore and able to see clearly before he was sent away to his community.

Christ also warned us in Luke 11: 34 -36 that we should 'take heed that the light which is in us is not darkness' because the lamp of the body is the eye, if our eye is good our whole body will be full of light but if our eye is bad the whole body will be full of darkness.

In Revelation 3:18 Jesus counsel the church to anoint their eyes with eye salve (I want to believe He's referring to the Holy Spirit) that they may see clearly.

Therefore as children of God we are required to come to Jesus daily just like the blind man, to get our sight restore, we should seek for Christ to put His hand on our eyes and cause us to look up to heaven so that every scale in our eyes will fall off that we may see well the visions and revelations from God. When our whole body is full of light we will have no part in darkness, and the light in us will shine so bright such that we will be able to fulfil God's purpose and become instruments in His hand to transformed many lives.

I pray that the Lord will work through us to perform His word and make us effective witnesses of His kingdom on earth.

Bunmi Oluloto

Servant of Christ in the Niger Republic and TLM Country Leader for Niger and Chad



When Jesus invites us to live Ephphatha

34. And when he lifted up his eyes, he sighed, and said, Ephphatha, that is to say, open yourself. 35. Immediately his ears opened, his tongue loosened, and he spoke very well. 36. Jesus told them not to speak to anyone; but the more he recommended them, the more they published it. Mark 7: 34-36

Mark presents Jesus healing. The risk of these stories would be that we only see the extraordinary side. Jesus, however, recommended "to say nothing to anyone". As if he told us: "Do not stay at the superficial level ...". It is each of us today that the Lord wants to heal from his spiritual deafness and muteness.

That day, Jesus made a visible and palpable sign: "The ears opened, and his tongue loosed and he spoke correctly ..." All can see fulfilling the promises of the prophet Isaiah: "Then the lame will leap like a stag, and the mouth of the mute will cry with joy. "

There is in us a deaf-mute, closed to his brothers and impervious to grace, unable to speak to God and communicate with others. Listen, talk ... It sounds natural! And yet, how many people around us, sometimes so close to us, that we do not hear anymore, to whom we do not speak anymore. Delivered to himself, man is locked in his selfishness, incapable of attentive listening.

What is already true of our human relationships is true to infinity in our relationship with God. To listen to God, we are deaf. To proclaim the Word of God, we often remain silent ... Jesus he is the man open to others. As scribes, Pharisees, Essenes and Sadducees raise barriers to isolate sinners and Samaritans, publicans and pagans, Jesus is seeking contact with everyone.

Mark's 7 shows us Jesus in Phenicia and Decapolis, at ease everywhere, and putting everyone at ease. He is the Friend who knows how to speak and the Master who knows how to listen. Conversely, Satan is closed to everything and closes the man in himself. Jesus breaks this closed world with a single word: "Ephphatha, Open up! He opens us to God and to others.

The world in which we are born is closed, but faith, which is a gift of the Lord, opens us. And let's notice how Jesus heals and frees. "He put his fingers in his ears, and touched his tongue with his saliva, then, rolling his eyes, he sighed ..."

Jesus opens to salvation by tangible actions: the meal of the Last Supper, the shed blood of the cross, the rolled stone of the empty tomb. Are we approaching Jesus to transform us into a new being, healed of his deafness and muteness ?



Psalm 74

A maskil of Asaph

¹O God, why have you rejected us forever?
Why does your anger smolder against the sheep of your pasture?

²Remember the nation you purchased long ago,
the people of your inheritance, whom you redeemed—
Mount Zion, where you dwelt.

³Turn your steps toward these everlasting ruins,
all this destruction the enemy has brought on the sanctuary.

⁴Your foes roared in the place where you met with us;
they set up their standards as signs.

⁵They behaved like men wielding axes
to cut through a thicket of trees.

⁶They smashed all the carved paneling
with their axes and hatchets.

⁷They burned your sanctuary to the ground;
they defiled the dwelling place of your Name.

⁸They said in their hearts, “We will crush them completely!”
They burned every place where God was worshiped in the land.

⁹We are given no signs from God;
no prophets are left,
and none of us knows how long this will be.

¹⁰How long will the enemy mock you, God?
Will the foe revile your name forever?

¹¹Why do you hold back your hand, your right hand?
Take it from the folds of your garment and destroy them!

¹²But God is my King from long ago;
he brings salvation on the earth.

¹³It was you who split open the sea by your power;
you broke the heads of the monster in the waters.

¹⁴It was you who crushed the heads of Leviathan
and gave it as food to the creatures of the desert.

¹⁵It was you who opened up springs and streams;
you dried up the ever-flowing rivers.

¹⁶The day is yours, and yours also the night;
you established the sun and moon.

¹⁷It was you who set all the boundaries of the earth;
you made both summer and winter.

¹⁸Remember how the enemy has mocked you, LORD,
how foolish people have reviled your name.

¹⁹Do not hand over the life of your dove to wild beasts;
do not forget the lives of your afflicted people forever.

²⁰Have regard for your covenant,
because haunts of violence fill the dark places of the land.

²¹Do not let the oppressed retreat in disgrace;
may the poor and needy praise your name.

²²Rise up, O God, and defend your cause;
remember how fools mock you all day long.

²³Do not ignore the clamor of your adversaries,
the uproar of your enemies, which rises continually.



Psalm 75

For the director of music. To the tune of "Do Not Destroy." A psalm of Asaph. A song.

¹We praise you, God,
we praise you, for your Name is near;
people tell of your wonderful deeds.

²You say, "I choose the appointed time;
it is I who judge with equity.

³When the earth and all its people quake,
it is I who hold its pillars firm.

⁴To the arrogant I say, 'Boast no more,'
and to the wicked, 'Do not lift up your horns.

⁵Do not lift your horns against heaven;
do not speak so defiantly.'"

⁶No one from the east or the west
or from the desert can exalt themselves.

⁷It is God who judges:
He brings one down, he exalts another.

⁸In the hand of the LORD is a cup
full of foaming wine mixed with spices;
he pours it out, and all the wicked of the earth
drink it down to its very dregs.

⁹As for me, I will declare this forever;
I will sing praise to the God of Jacob,

¹⁰who says, "I will cut off the horns of all the wicked,
but the horns of the righteous will be lifted up."



Fifty or Five Thousand?

Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. John 6:27 (NIV)

After a boy's five loaves and two fish had fed the crowds on the hills above Galilee, the Lord took the opportunity to build on what had happened and drew spiritual truths from the event. It was a little different for us, but we too realised that there's more to feeding than food.

Every day the 'Free Feeding' van would leave the Salvation Army's Red Shield Guest House in Madras/Chennai with cauldrons of rice and dhal, usually with a vegetable and on festival occasions, something extra. It would call at five points in the city where they would meet a queue of people waiting for their meal of the day. Some would come with a tiffin can, others a discarded plastic container, and some with just a plastic bag. After traditional hand-washing most would stop and eat on the spot; others would move off, presumably to share what they got with someone else, whether that was in a crowded room up rickety stairs or in the makeshift shelter of a pavement sleeper.

There was no attempt to 'preach' but a member of the team offered prayer and there were attempts to engage in conversation with the beneficiaries. But these were not static food banks where people can come and go at their leisure, but rather more like 'meals on wheels', and the wheels had to keep going. After all there were another fifty waiting at the next stop.

The programme was funded by a generous German donor who came out to India once a year to see what was happening, check the accounts and evaluate the effectiveness of what was being done. 'I'm happy to carry on doing what I'm doing,' he explained, 'but is there no way we can get to know more about the underlying problems of each person in the queue?'

A social worker was appointed. Slowly he got to know the people. Occasionally there were solutions that meant they no longer needed to join the queue. But there were always others to take their place. This was not a disease to be defeated - end of problem. Here were deep-seated socio-economic factors impacting people and whole families. At least they had something to eat. The programme continued.

'Never mind,' said the generous benefactor. 'After all it was Jesus who said: "I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat ... (We know the rest). Whatever you did not do for the least of these, you did not do for me." I don't want to 'not do' this. I'll carry on.'

So we did.

Former TLMI vice-president **Dr Paul du Plessis**, and his wife, Margaret, served as Salvation Army leaders in Central India 1990-94, based in Madras/Chennai.



A Haven

I was a stranger and you did not invite me in. Matthew 25:43 (NIV)

Over a hundred years ago Salvationist workers discovered that there were women in the port city of Madras, now Chennai, involved in prostitution. Many were there by choice, but some had been forced into the sex industry and wanted a way out. That was difficult. Even if they escaped the clutches of their captors, very rarely were they welcomed back home. They had become estranged from family and friends. In many ways they had become outcasts. Who would help? That was how a home for women and children started. That's what it was - a home.

A century later those staying at The Haven have different reasons for being there but there is still a sense of family and community. That's their home. That's where they belong. Some are destitute widows; others have a severe disability that makes living in the mainstream of society difficult; and over the years children who have been looked after in other homes have transferred there in their teens.

We loved visiting The Haven. Sometimes it was just to say hello. Best of all was the annual visit on Christmas Day, playing party games with the residents. We could feel the warmth of their welcome. We were wanted there too. We felt at home. They called us 'uncle' and 'auntie'. We were part of the family! A Norwegian Salvation Army officer had served as matron/supervisor/manager for 25 or more years. She knew them all; she loved them as her own family. One of her greatest joys was to arrange marriages for some of the residents. And equal to that, was receiving the firstborn child for special prayer and dedication of mother and father to the responsibilities of parenting.

Even in times when institutional programmes have had a bad press, and often with good reason, The Haven has been exemplary.

Leprosy Mission programmes operate with the same motivation, of serving Christ by serving others. We welcome people who may feel they've become strangers because of an unpleasant disease. And by the way, helping women out of sexual exploitation continues, with confidential programmes, but now generally in secret locations.

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Recycled; Transformed; Made New

He who was seated on the throne said, "I am making everything new!" Revelation 21:5 (NIV)

Receiving someone else's cast-offs, sorting, cleaning and presenting them for resale has become big business for the charitable sector in many parts of the world. Even in our High Street in Bromley, South London, there must be a dozen or so Charity Shops. But in Madras/Chennai of the early 90s it wasn't clothing, but paper.

The electronic era was just on the horizon and banks were still heavily reliant on paper for their accounts. They trusted The Salvation Army to ensure confidentiality in the process of disposal and were willing to pass on out of date records for recycling.

A cycle rickshaw would do the rounds of the banks involved and deliver bags of paper to a Salvation Army centre where a dozen or two elderly and often disabled 'workers' were based. Some had 'graduated' from the free feeding programme and their meagre income added a measure of dignity. Shredding and compacting into bales was the task in hand. The workers chatted away as they worked. There was a vibrant sense of community.

A dealer would collect the bales. The paper would eventually be pressed into fresh, clean sheets of paper to be re-used. Income was being generated at several levels. It seemed like a winner all round. Yes, there were opportunities for misconduct and misappropriation, but generally things worked well. This was small scale recycling; but there was also transformation of people's attitudes and self-worth.

Dignity was being discovered. The paper was being made new, people were being made new. And finance, a necessary ingredient of all charitable work, was being generated.

But with the growth of the computer and the advent of electronic banking, the supply of paper dried up. It was a small project, and just a few people might have benefited, but, sadly, the project has been discontinued.

But when a project ceases, we need to look to the one who makes all things new, if only for fresh ideas as to how to achieve the same or similar objectives in the world of today.

He still wants to make all things new!

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Education and Learning

Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it.
Proverbs 22:6 (NIV)

It was the plight of impoverished children in London and their exclusion from regular education that motivated several people in the early 19th century to address their needs. Their unkempt appearance and behaviour challenged teachers. Even Sunday Schools became out of bounds for them. 'Ragged Schools' were set up. Almost anywhere would do. Some were held in disused stables, others under railways arches. The aim was to give the children a better start in life, preventing crime and vagrancy.

By 1840, and not long before a parallel organisation, *The Mission to Lepers*, was born in the heart of Wellesley Bailey, a network of such schools had been established. Among their supporters were the social reformer Anthony Astley Cooper (Lord Shaftesbury) and the author, Charles Dickens. He set his book *Oliver Twist* in one of these schools. By the time Dr Barnardo got involved, the Ragged Schools had become the *Shaftesbury Society*.

I knew virtually nothing about them until discovering that a Salvation Army property in Periamet, Madras, had started off as a Ragged School. There was a central chapel and a few out-buildings to house the two dozen, mostly orphaned, boys now accommodated there. We gave them somewhere to stay; it was rightly called the Madras Boys' Home. No longer ragged, they went off to the local school in uniforms pristinely ironed with an old-fashioned iron carrying a few glowing coals. Reading, writing and arithmetic took place on weekdays. And they did attend Sunday School!

There were the inevitable challenges of boys living together, but they did well. The highlight of our year was a cricket match with them in the compound on Christmas Day - India vs South Africa! Admittedly it was only played with a tennis ball.

This investment in people was worthwhile. Education does make a difference. A number of them have done well - an office clerk, manager of a guest house, owner of a bottled water firm. And one has even started a similar organisation for other boys, similarly placed. I guess TLM could produce similar stories.

Organisations evolve with time; names even change. *The Mission to Lepers* is now *The Leprosy Mission*; the *Ragged Schools Union* and the *Shaftesbury Society* have become *Livability*. Both have an increasing commitment to disabled persons.

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Growing in grace

Ephesians 4.1-16

'Faith2share' is the name of a worldwide network of Christian organisations involved in mission. The aim of the network is to see people's lives really changed by the gospel message. It has recently published a booklet about their work, and I found the following extract very thought-provoking:

"In 1994 Rwanda was arguably the most Christian country in the world with an excess of 90% of its population belonging to one church or another, and yet in a few fateful months 7.3 million people died in an horrific genocide. Most were killed by Christians. Why?"

In December 2000 a number of senior church leaders in India launched a high profile national campaign against corruption within the church in India. Internationally crime committed within the church is estimated at 40 billion per year. Why?"

Across Europe millions of Christians who were in church on Sunday are busy on Tuesday accessing pornography, stealing from their employer, physically and mentally abusing their spouse or children in their care, and destroying the environment. Why?"

I am so glad that I am not the person who wrote this, as I remember Jesus' words, 'he who is without sin throw the first stone.' And of course we all fail because we are all human. But the author of the article is not having a big get-at toward us; his aim is to highlight the importance of church teaching. So the article goes on, *"Mission is not just about beliefs or which church we belong to – it is about how we live. One of the biggest challenges for mission today is not just making new Christians but growing disciples – young people, women and men who live like Jesus and reflect his values at work at home and in society."*

The same message comes through loud and clear in Paul's letter to the Ephesians. Paul is saying, "As a prisoner of the Lord, I beg you to live in a way that is worthy of the people God has chosen to be his own. Always be humble and gentle. Patiently put up with each other and love each other. Try your best to let God's Spirit keep your hearts united. Do this by living at peace."

Paul goes on to explain that after his ascension, Jesus poured out gifts on the church. Individual Christians are gifted by the Holy Spirit in different ways, but all the gifts are designed to build up the community of the church and the relationship we have with the Lord and with each other. We have a calling to be Jesus' hands, feet, his very presence in the world around us, but our service is hampered if some aspect of our lives is badly out of kilter and lets us down. The Holy Spirit's gifts to the church are given to help us, and to help new Christians, get our lives sorted out,

In a truly healthy and loving church, there is an understanding of the trust and confidentiality needed amongst us all so we can share our need, and when necessary, as Paul puts it, 'speak the truth in love' to one another. In this way we can find true forgiveness and the ability to really live our lives in God's way. The teaching and caring ministries are certainly not only for the clergy! They are ministries that we all need to develop so we can help each other and also help new church members to become more like Jesus.



Psalm 76

For the director of music. With stringed instruments. A psalm of Asaph. A song.

- ¹ God is renowned in Judah;
in Israel his name is great.
- ² His tent is in Salem,
his dwelling place in Zion.
- ³ There he broke the flashing arrows,
the shields and the swords, the weapons of war.
- ⁴ You are radiant with light,
more majestic than mountains rich with game.
- ⁵ The valiant lie plundered,
they sleep their last sleep;
not one of the warriors
can lift his hands.
- ⁶ At your rebuke, God of Jacob,
both horse and chariot lie still.
- ⁷ It is you alone who are to be feared.
Who can stand before you when you are angry?
- ⁸ From heaven you pronounced judgment,
and the land feared and was quiet—
- ⁹ when you, God, rose up to judge,
to save all the afflicted of the land.
- ¹⁰ Surely your wrath against mankind brings you praise,
and the survivors of your wrath are restrained.
- ¹¹ Make vows to the LORD your God and fulfill them;
let all the neighboring lands
bring gifts to the One to be feared.
- ¹² He breaks the spirit of rulers;
he is feared by the kings of the earth.



Psalm 77

For the director of music. For Jeduthun. Of Asaph. A psalm.

¹I cried out to God for help;
I cried out to God to hear me.
²When I was in distress, I sought the Lord;
at night I stretched out untiring hands,
and I would not be comforted.
³I remembered you, God, and I groaned;
I meditated, and my spirit grew faint.
⁴You kept my eyes from closing;
I was too troubled to speak.
⁵I thought about the former days,
the years of long ago;
⁶I remembered my songs in the night.
My heart meditated and my spirit asked:
⁷“Will the Lord reject forever?
Will he never show his favor again?
⁸Has his unfailing love vanished forever?
Has his promise failed for all time?
⁹Has God forgotten to be merciful?
Has he in anger withheld his compassion?”
¹⁰Then I thought, “To this I will appeal:
the years when the Most High stretched out his right hand.
¹¹I will remember the deeds of the LORD;
yes, I will remember your miracles of long ago.
¹²I will consider all your works
and meditate on all your mighty deeds.”
¹³Your ways, God, are holy.
What god is as great as our God?
¹⁴You are the God who performs miracles;
you display your power among the peoples.
¹⁵With your mighty arm you redeemed your people,
the descendants of Jacob and Joseph.

¹⁶The waters saw you, God,
the waters saw you and writhed;
the very depths were convulsed.

¹⁷The clouds poured down water,
the heavens resounded with thunder;
your arrows flashed back and forth.

¹⁸Your thunder was heard in the whirlwind,
your lightning lit up the world;
the earth trembled and quaked.

¹⁹Your path led through the sea,
your way through the mighty waters,
though your footprints were not seen.

²⁰You led your people like a flock
by the hand of Moses and Aaron.



Five studies on mission from the Gospel of Mark – 1

“In saying this, Jesus declared all foods clean” (Mark 7:19) Read Mark 7:1-23

In all cultures that have been influenced by modern medicine, we agree that is a good idea to wash your hands before you eat. It's just basic hygiene. It's about microbes and pathogens.

In the Jewish context, handwashing was a religious duty. It was about obeying the law of God as given by Moses. Jesus' disciples were not scrupulous in keeping the rules. They were not part of the elite and practical realities would sometimes override the rules. Jesus understood that and was fine with it. In fact, he stood up for them when the Pharisees and teachers of the law attacked them for eating with unwashed hands. Mark wrote his gospel in Rome. His description of the situation shows that his readers did not know the details of Jewish food and hygiene rules. So why did he record this discussion at all? The answer is that this incident was the springboard to a very important teaching of Jesus that was totally different from anything the teachers of the law or even the disciples themselves had ever heard. Jesus revolutionized the theology of his day by saying that anything that comes from outside your body cannot make you unclean. Such things can make you ill, as all health workers will tell you, but they cannot make you ritually unclean. They do not affect your good standing before the Lord. Not even an infection with M Leprae changes the acceptance of the person affected by Jesus.

Extrapolating from that, your choice of foods may affect your health but has nothing to do with your status before God. Even if you eat pizza seven days a week, you can still be a Christian and fully participate in the Christian community. The comment above (Mk 7:19) is the shortest summary of this very important teaching.

This discussion became very important in the early church. Should non-Jewish followers of Jesus adopt the Jewish lifestyle including their rules of food and hygiene? This was a big question that took the church a number of years to answer. It directly affected Christians in Rome, some of whom were Jewish, while others were not. We read in Acts 15 how the church eventually called an international assembly and formulated a definitive answer to that question. The apostle Peter played a significant role in that assembly and we also know Mark worked closely with Peter when he wrote his gospel. Jesus' teaching in Mark 7 serves as the basis for the decision taken in Acts 15. It was a monumental decision, a paradigm shift, that forever changed the course of development of the church and allowed the gospel to irreversibly go international from then on.

Jesus showed his disciples – and us – that we can be relaxed about adjusting the rules to new circumstances. The Christian faith is not a lifestyle or a culture. Rather it transforms every human culture from within. As our hearts are transformed by the gospel of Jesus Christ, we will be able to discern what should change in the way we live and what can remain the same. Our rules should be realistic and reflect the divine principles of peace and justice, grace and truth, love and faithfulness. The laws of Moses give us a vision of what that could look like in one particular set of realities. It is for Christian communities to prayerfully reflect on the implications of that revelation for their own contexts.

Mark records that at the time, the disciples did not understand Jesus teaching. But that is an issue we will address another day.

Johan Velema worked with TLM international office from 1999 to 2011. He then studied theology and is currently working with the Christian & Missionary Alliance in West Africa.



Five studies on mission from the Gospel of Mark – 2

“The woman was a Gentile, born in Syrian Phoenicia” (Mark 7:26) Read Mark 7:24-30

Jesus had become a celebrity. Wherever he went, he was recognised and people would flock around him and ask him questions. They invariably had great expectations of him. Jesus tried to respond but it was too much. There would not even be time to eat (Mk 6:31)! He had tried to withdraw with his disciples to a quiet place, but the attempt had failed (6:34). People had found him again and it was ministry time again. That is why they had gone further away, across the border. Jesus needed to be alone and they also needed team time. They needed time to process what had happened so far and re-focus.

So they went on a retreat. And peace settled over them. Finally a time of rest, a time to express themselves, catch up on sleep, have a good meal. A time to listen more carefully to God than is possible in the busy-ness of everyday life. What was Jesus thinking about? About his mission to the people of God, about God’s love for them and his plans with them. That is the first thing he talks about when his thoughts are interrupted.

For here is this local woman who falls on her knees before him so that Jesus cannot avoid her. Matthew tells us she had tried to approach him before but He had ignored her (Mt 15:23). But she insists on speaking to Jesus himself. We do not know where she got her information from, but she realizes Jesus is her only chance to find freedom for her daughter. And as a mother, she wants to do everything she possibly can to save her. She takes all the risk and throws herself in front of Jesus.

Jesus is clearly not in the mood for miracles of any kind. His priority is to define his strategy for his ministry back home. And he tells her. And she totally accepts that he has other things on his mind. Her faith is expressed in her reference to the crumbs that fall from the table. A crumb is enough. That is all I need. With all the abundant blessing that comes to Israel, surely a tiny crumb can overflow to the non-Jewish people around? This woman’s attitude illustrates the two focal points of prayer: a strong sense of need and total trust in God’s ability to provide.

And so the horizon widened. For Jesus and for the disciples. There are those who have faith across the border! People from another culture! It is as if God used this woman to speak to them about a wider ministry. The words of Isaiah apply where God says to his servant: It is too small a thing for you to be my servant to restore the tribes of Jacob and bring back those of Israel I have kept. I will also make you a light to the gentiles, that my salvation may reach to the ends of the earth (Isa 49:6).

The incident with the Syrophenician woman was not forgotten. When Peter and Mark were in Rome and looked back on the development of the church over the past decades, they could see the significance of this moment. Something of the worldwide impact of the gospel had become visible already here.

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Five studies on mission from the Gospel of Mark – 3

“Do you have eyes but fail to see, and ears but fail to hear?” (Mark 8:18) Read Mark 8:14-21

Jesus was frustrated with his disciples. They were such slow learners! Already when he taught them the lesson about food & hygiene rules he had said: Are you so dull? Don't you see...? (Mk 7:18). When he then tried to talk to them further about the enormous influence the teachers of the law had over them, they did not catch his meaning at all. They rather thought he was rebuking them for not bringing enough food for the journey.

Jesus' response is surprisingly tough. He calls his disciples blind and deaf. In Mark chapter four Jesus had used these words for the crowds that came to listen to him. He had said to his disciples: The secret of the Kingdom has been given to you but those outside - they will see and not perceive and hear but not understand (4:12). Now Jesus is applying these same words (which he quoted from the prophet Isaiah (6:9-10)) to his own disciples.

You can almost hear Jesus say to himself: What am I going to do? These men must become apostles two years from now and lead the church and spread the gospel all over the world. They still have such a long way to go! How can I ever teach them enough in such a short time?

The disciples had left their nets and followed Jesus. They saw him as a man from God. Later in this same chapter they say to him: You are the Messiah (8:29). But what that meant exactly, they were much less clear about. When Jesus talked to them about his resolve to go to the cross, they did not want to hear of it (8:32) and when he speaks to them about the resurrection, they ask each other: what is he talking about (9:10)?

This is why Mark has included in these same chapters the stories of the healing of a man who was deaf (7:31-37) and of another man who was blind (8:22-26). The early church fathers have always insisted these were symbolic of the spiritual deafness and blindness the people around Jesus suffered from. Even the disciples, who had followed Jesus and saw him as sent from God, did not fully understand what that meant.

Like the blind man who at first could see but was unable to make out any details. It was confusing for him. It took a second laying on of hands for him to regain his full vision and be able to fully function again. In the same way, the disciples needed a miracle from God to be able to accurately see and understand what Jesus had come to do in the world.

On the day of Pentecost, the disciples did see clearly and, thanks to the bible studies they had been having in the preceding days, could clearly articulate what Jesus death and resurrection meant for the people who had gathered in Jerusalem. By then, their eyes had been fully opened, they had heard and understood.

We are also disciples of Jesus. How often do we fail to fully understand things in the teaching of Jesus? Sometimes it takes many years to truly understand something we have been taught. Let us remain open to the leading of the Holy Spirit to give us insight so that we can grow in our Christian faith and gain more effectiveness in our ministries.

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Five studies on mission from the Gospel of Mark – 4

“Why are you talking about having no bread?” (Mark 8:17) Read Mark 8:13-21

Jesus had had a particularly difficult confrontation with the Pharisees. He had ended it by getting in the boat and telling his disciples to set off across the lake. It had all happened rather quickly. As they left the village behind and the tranquillity of the lake settled over them, Jesus was still musing about what had just happened. But the disciples did not understand what he was trying to say. They thought he was rebuking them for not bringing enough food for the journey.

In chapter 6, Jesus had sent out the disciples in pairs and instructed them to not take any food with them. They had simply trusted in the hospitality of the people they would meet and this had worked wonderfully well. Their meals would not have been regular like clockwork on the table, but there had always been enough. So why were the disciples concerned? Possibly they felt guilty about not having done their job. They had not been ready when Jesus suddenly decided to leave. Or perhaps they were not too pleased about going hungry for the duration of the boat trip. They were out of their comfort zone and didn't like it. Jesus himself, of course, was willing to go without food for any length of time. On one occasion, he had gone without food for forty days and had still refused to ask for any food for himself (Mt 4). But when the crowds had been with him for three days in a lonely place, he decided that something must be done to provide them with food (Mk 8:1-3).

The miraculous multiplication of the loaves of bread (and the fish!) has been the subject of many sermons. Many Bible teachers have drawn important and inspiring lessons from it. Enough to fill a whole week of devotions! Here, Jesus himself draws a lesson from those events that we might not have thought of immediately. It is about the left-overs after the meal. There had been such an abundance of food that even the left-overs were enough to feed the disciples for several days.

Thus when Jesus and the disciples had focussed on the needs of others and asked God for a miracle to cater for those needs, God had, in that same movement, also provided for what they themselves needed. I think it is something many would confirm from their own experience. When we pour ourselves out in ministry to others, God graciously cares for our needs as well. It does not mean we should be careless or negligent in the way we care for ourselves or our families. But it does mean we are free to make others the focus of our efforts knowing that if unexpected needs arise God is gracious to care for those as well.

There is another lesson here, too. It is a lesson about the divine power of Jesus. It was Jesus who multiplied the bread. It was Jesus who had calmed the storm (Mk 6:51-52). He had control over creation. He never misused that power to promote himself (as the Pharisees had been asking him to do in Mk 6:11). But here He promised the disciples he would (again) use it for them if necessary. He re-assured them that as long as they stayed close to him, they would be fine.



Five studies on mission from the Gospel of Mark – 4

“...but whoever loses their life for me and for the gospel will save it.” (Mark 8:35) Read Mark 8:34-38

The gospel of Mark is really the gospel of Peter. When Peter was preaching in Rome, Mark wrote down his words and together they discussed how this could best be done. In chapters seven and eight, which we have been reading over the past week, Peter and Mark brought together lessons about Mission. Lessons that Jesus taught his disciples with a view to their future role as communicators of the gospel across cultural boundaries. Note that the largest part of the events in these chapters happen outside the borders of their own country. They are in Tyre, Sidon, Bethsaida, Decapolis, Caesarea-Philippi. Only the discussions with the Pharisees and teachers of the law happened on the west side of the lake of Galilee and both were followed by Jesus departure. The three healings in these chapters concern people who were not Jewish. Also, the second time Jesus miraculously multiplied bread and fish was for a crowd of non-Jewish people.

So let me summarize the lessons we could draw from these two chapters.

First, we saw the theological discussion Jesus had with the teachers of the law about the food and hygiene laws the Jewish people kept. Jesus was willing to drop the details and focus on the heart of the person as the place where cleansing and purity should take place. He said that the essence of his teaching was not in external customs but in a transformation from within. In this way, he made it possible for the gospel to travel to other cultures.

Second, Mark records the experience of Jesus and the disciples of finding a striking expression of faith in a non-Jewish woman. She unhesitatingly put all her trust in the Lord Jesus and received from him what she asked. Thus it proved possible for non-Jewish people to receive favour from God.

Third, the deaf man in chapter 7 illustrated the inability of the Pharisees and teachers of the law to accept Jesus teaching. Similarly, the blind man in chapter 8 illustrated the inability of the disciples to fully understand who Jesus was and how God would use him for the salvation of the world. These two healings were signs of hope. They showed that it takes nothing short of a miracle for people to accept Jesus and to fully understand his teaching. Yet, such miracles happen. These things are possible with God and within his will.

Finally, Jesus reassured his disciples that if worse came to worse, he would not abandon them but provide for their basic needs. He urged them to stay close to him and focus on their ministry. That would be their best insurance against any unexpected difficulty they might face.

The disciples did internalize these lessons about mission. Tradition tells us that after some time Mark went to Egypt, Peter to Rome, Bartholomew to Armenia, Thomas to India. The church became an international grass roots movement. People from all walks embraced the gospel and were changed by it. In turn, they changed the world around them.

We can be Christians because of these apostles who accepted Jesus teaching and, led by the Holy Spirit, took the risk to act upon it. Today's Bible reading challenges us to do the same and take the risk and act on whatever we have understood of the gospel of Christ.

It will change us, allow us to better understand it and it will bring light to the world!

Johan Velema worked with TLM international office from 1999 to 2011. He then studied theology and is currently working with the Christian & Missionary Alliance in West Africa.



Psalm 78 – Part 1.

A maskil of Asaph.

- ¹ My people, hear my teaching; listen to the words of my mouth.
² I will open my mouth with a parable;
I will utter hidden things, things from of old—
³ things we have heard and known, things our ancestors have told us.
⁴ We will not hide them from their descendants;
we will tell the next generation
the praiseworthy deeds of the LORD,
his power, and the wonders he has done.
⁵ He decreed statutes for Jacob
and established the law in Israel,
which he commanded our ancestors
to teach their children,
⁶ so the next generation would know them,
even the children yet to be born,
and they in turn would tell their children.
⁷ Then they would put their trust in God
and would not forget his deeds but would keep his commands.
⁸ They would not be like their ancestors—
a stubborn and rebellious generation,
whose hearts were not loyal to God,
whose spirits were not faithful to him.
- ⁹ The men of Ephraim, though armed with bows,
turned back on the day of battle;
¹⁰ they did not keep God's covenant
and refused to live by his law.
¹¹ They forgot what he had done,
the wonders he had shown them.
- ¹² He did miracles in the sight of their ancestors
in the land of Egypt, in the region of Zoan.
¹³ He divided the sea and led them through;
he made the water stand up like a wall.
¹⁴ He guided them with the cloud by day
and with light from the fire all night.
¹⁵ He split the rocks in the wilderness
and gave them water as abundant as the seas;
¹⁶ he brought streams out of a rocky crag
and made water flow down like rivers.
- ¹⁷ But they continued to sin against him,
rebellious in the wilderness against the Most High.
¹⁸ They willfully put God to the test

by demanding the food they craved.

¹⁹ They spoke against God;
they said, "Can God really
spread a table in the wilderness?"

²⁰ True, he struck the rock,
and water gushed out,
streams flowed abundantly,
but can he also give us bread?

Can he supply meat for his people?"

²¹ When the LORD heard them, he was furious;
his fire broke out against Jacob,
and his wrath rose against Israel,

²² for they did not believe in God
or trust in his deliverance.

²³ Yet he gave a command to the skies above
and opened the doors of the heavens;

²⁴ he rained down manna for the people to eat,
he gave them the grain of heaven.

²⁵ Human beings ate the bread of angels;
he sent them all the food they could eat.

²⁶ He let loose the east wind from the heavens
and by his power made the south wind blow.

²⁷ He rained meat down on them like dust,
birds like sand on the seashore.

²⁸ He made them come down inside their camp,
all around their tents.

²⁹ They ate till they were gorged—
he had given them what they craved.

³⁰ But before they turned from what they craved,
even while the food was still in their mouths,

³¹ God's anger rose against them;
he put to death the sturdiest among them,
cutting down the young men of Israel.

³² In spite of all this, they kept on sinning;
in spite of his wonders, they did not believe.

³³ So he ended their days in futility
and their years in terror.

³⁴ Whenever God slew them, they would seek him;
they eagerly turned to him again.

³⁵ They remembered that God was their Rock,
that God Most High was their Redeemer.

³⁶ But then they would flatter him with their mouths,
lying to him with their tongues;

³⁷ their hearts were not loyal to him,
they were not faithful to his covenant.

³⁸ Yet he was merciful; he forgave their iniquities
and did not destroy them.

Time after time he restrained his anger and did not stir up his full wrath.

³⁹ He remembered that they were but flesh,
a passing breeze that does not return.



Psalm 78 – Part 1.

A maskil of Asaph.

- ⁴⁰ How often they rebelled against him in the wilderness
and grieved him in the wasteland!
- ⁴¹ Again and again they put God to the test;
they vexed the Holy One of Israel.
- ⁴² They did not remember his power—
the day he redeemed them from the oppressor,
- ⁴³ the day he displayed his signs in Egypt,
his wonders in the region of Zoan.
- ⁴⁴ He turned their river into blood;
they could not drink from their streams.
- ⁴⁵ He sent swarms of flies that devoured them,
and frogs that devastated them.
- ⁴⁶ He gave their crops to the grasshopper,
their produce to the locust.
- ⁴⁷ He destroyed their vines with hail
and their sycamore-figs with sleet.
- ⁴⁸ He gave over their cattle to the hail,
their livestock to bolts of lightning.
- ⁴⁹ He unleashed against them his hot anger,
his wrath, indignation and hostility—
a band of destroying angels.
- ⁵⁰ He prepared a path for his anger;
he did not spare them from death
but gave them over to the plague.
- ⁵¹ He struck down all the firstborn of Egypt,
the firstfruits of manhood in the tents of Ham.
- ⁵² But he brought his people out like a flock;
he led them like sheep through the wilderness.
- ⁵³ He guided them safely, so they were unafraid;
but the sea engulfed their enemies.
- ⁵⁴ And so he brought them to the border of his holy land,
to the hill country his right hand had taken.
- ⁵⁵ He drove out nations before them
and allotted their lands to them as an inheritance;
he settled the tribes of Israel in their homes.
- ⁵⁶ But they put God to the test
and rebelled against the Most High;
they did not keep his statutes.
- ⁵⁷ Like their ancestors they were disloyal and faithless,

as unreliable as a faulty bow.

⁵⁸ They angered him with their high places;
they aroused his jealousy with their idols.

⁵⁹ When God heard them, he was furious;
he rejected Israel completely.

⁶⁰ He abandoned the tabernacle of Shiloh,
the tent he had set up among humans.

⁶¹ He sent the ark of his might into captivity,
his splendor into the hands of the enemy.

⁶² He gave his people over to the sword;
he was furious with his inheritance.

⁶³ Fire consumed their young men,
and their young women had no wedding songs;

⁶⁴ their priests were put to the sword,
and their widows could not weep.

⁶⁵ Then the Lord awoke as from sleep,
as a warrior wakes from the stupor of wine.

⁶⁶ He beat back his enemies;
he put them to everlasting shame.

⁶⁷ Then he rejected the tents of Joseph,
he did not choose the tribe of Ephraim;

⁶⁸ but he chose the tribe of Judah,
Mount Zion, which he loved.

⁶⁹ He built his sanctuary like the heights,
like the earth that he established forever.

⁷⁰ He chose David his servant
and took him from the sheep pens;

⁷¹ from tending the sheep he brought him
to be the shepherd of his people Jacob,
of Israel his inheritance.

⁷² And David shepherded them with integrity of heart;
with skillful hands he led them.



“My Lord and my God”

John 20: 28

Some years ago I met Sharleen* who has a severe disability as a result of polio. She walks with great difficulty and sometimes uses a wheelchair.

She shared with me the negative experiences she had in churches, with people who wanted to pray for her to be healed of her disability. Often they accused her that sin in her life is the cause for having a disability and not being healed.

This was a huge spiritual struggle for Sharleen, she doubted God and every Christian. “I argued with God, You stay there, and mind your own business, and I’ll mind mine. However, this distance between me and God could not last long.

One day I felt God reaching out to me, encouraging me, and inviting me to trust Him with my life. The words of doubting Thomas came to me: ‘My Lord and my God’. I was now ready to make this the motto of my life, trusting that God will sustain me in living with a disability.

I never received the miracle healing that some people wanted to impose on me, but I learnt so much from God, that He has a purpose and plan for my life. I learnt to over-look the insensitivities of some church people and serve God with my physical disability. I’m good enough for Him, just as I am.”

*not her real name

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



Old fashioned letters

Ephesians chapter 6, verses 19-22 (part of a first century missionary prayer letter) and 1 Cor 1 v 1-9 (the opening of another letter from a missionary to his friends).

As a young child I had been taught to write “thank you letters” and holiday post cards, but when I was 11 years old I discovered the joy of maintaining a friendship through correspondence alone. Our family had moved from Yorkshire to Somerset, with the result that I was parted from my “best friend”. The two of us exchanged letters regularly for many years, though we never again met face to face. This type of correspondence became even more important to me when we moved again 4 years later: then I had three more special friends with whom to correspond. When one writes like that to a well-known person, one can “speak freely”, and look for frank feedback, there can be a genuine exchange of views through the post, one can share deeply.

Once I went to India to work for The Leprosy Mission, I had to learn a new style of letter-writing. The quarterly newsletters I composed would be an official communication going out to dozens of supporters. I was writing as a representative of the mission, not as a private individual, and my words would reach complete strangers. It was possible that extracts from my letters would be reproduced in church magazines or quoted in promotional Talks, possibly losing their contextual background. Of course, I would still write honestly but I had to be more careful to avoid ambiguity or potentially misleading comments (or any references to colleagues which might embarrass them). I later heard that some people kept my letters, and prayed over them, or passed them to their friends. In the early years I posted hand-written letters, which someone at TLM office typed & photocopied. Later I composed letters on a computer and sent them by email.

I was thinking about all this when we studied one of the Epistles in church. Paul and other writers of epistles composed Letters which they intended to be shared amongst many Christians (eg Gal 1v 1-5, or Eph 1 v 1-2, or Phil 1 v 1-2). They expected the originals to be read aloud in meetings and physically passed from one congregation to another (1 Thess 5 v27, Col 4 v 16) as there were no photocopying machines, printing presses or even type writers with carbon paper. Some of the epistles were dictated to a scribe but others were physically written by the author (1 Cor 16 v 21, Gal 6 v11, 2 Thess 3 v17). They were not usually going to be present to explain or defend what they had written, so it had to be put down carefully to convey exactly the message they believed God had given them.

Occasionally one sees the epistle writer slip into friendship mode when writing to a church where he knows people (2 Cor 6 v11, Col 4 v17, Phil 4 v 2, 2 Tim 4 v 13, Titus 3 v13) and a personal greeting or request is found in the text. Sometimes he is unsure about a point and guardedly says “this is what I think...”, to indicate it might not be doctrinally valid in every situation (2 Cor 8 v 8 and v10) and elsewhere he states “this is the truth” (1 Tim 2 v 9, compare 1 Tim 3 v1). As well as theological teaching, the epistles contain news of Christians elsewhere (2 Cor 8 v1-5 and 2 Cor 9 v 2), intended to encourage or challenge the recipient congregation. Most of the content of the epistles is obviously composed thoughtfully, with attention to detail, bearing in mind the unknown situations in which they might be received and the diverse audience who will hear or read the letter.... which includes us.

What a treasure we have in the collection of Letters in our Bibles!

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”.



“Wake up, O sleeper and rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.”

As I awaken your spirit to hear what you could not hear in the past and open your eyes to see what you could not see in the past, you will become overwhelmed with my great love for you. For my love never fails and is beyond comprehension or ability to be measured. As you see manifestation of my love all around you, your heart will be overwhelmed, and your mind will be overloaded. You will become flooded and overloaded with my activity and involvement in your life, particularly as you see me moving in large scale pressures giving birth to new adjustments, changes, and innovations.

‘And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose’ Romans 8:28 ‘Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground outside your Father’s care. And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. So don’t be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows.’ Matthew 10:29-31

For the details of the day can seem insignificant as they are observed from a distance, and without context, but as you see a larger scale manifestation of my heart towards you, your perspective will change, and you will rightly interpret what you previously could not. You will see my hand at play in large scale adjustments within your nation and will see how the pressures of direction and timing of delivery and development have been governed by my will.

And as a result, you will remember me. You will remember I am the one who set the stars in their place. You will remember the reach of my hand, and the full extent of the grasp and influence of my power. You will remember my hand, but you will also remember my heart, for as you observe the gestures, shaking, and awakening you will also become aware of the motivations behind them, and the results they are producing.

So, allow me to provoke you. Allow me to press your circumstances and move you past your own preferences. Allow me to strip you bare of your mechanisms of security, so you will be left with none but me. In doing so you will be stripped of their influence and will see me for who I am, as you begin to see them for who and what they are. In this recognition and acknowledgement, you will embrace me and will reject all others, and will abide in even greater security within your heart, and even greater abundance within your environment.

‘But everything exposed by the light becomes visible—and everything that is illuminated becomes a light. This is why it is said: “Wake up, sleeper, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.” Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise,’ Ephesians 5:13-15

My love for you will manifest in a number of ways but will lead you to truth and to liberation. Though I will be honest, and though my love will be true, it will not always be polite, agreeable, manageable, or convenient. The fire of my heart is unmatched and unbridled. The fire of my heart is not able to be tamed or restrained. The fire of my heart will burn away all that is false, worthless, and trivial, and will refine what is good, worthwhile and valuable.

‘But whenever anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord’s glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.’ 2 Corinthians 3:16-18

So grab on to the what I have for you, and do not shy away from the pain and discomfort of growth. Though it will cost you something, it will repay and benefit you, for my great and overwhelming love will electrify your heart, and will propel you forward into new directions, with greater zeal and capacity than you have previously known.

Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe, for our “God is a consuming fire.” ‘ Hebrews 12:28-29

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Marie N Arnachellum, Travel & Resources Co-ordinator, TLMEW



All Saints

The first day of November is the feast of All Saints. In a good Protestant medical Mission saints may not be the highlight of the year! They were a contentious issue at the Reformation because the Protestant watchword was « justification by faith. » In other traditions, like the Catholic one, Christians still ask the Saints to pray for them. Some, but by no means all Anglicans, do so as well. The tradition existed because medieval Christians worried about “the devil and all his works.” The devil was renounced, along with “all the sinful lusts of the flesh” in the Anglican catechism until only forty years ago.

Sometimes wall paintings in old churches include lurid pictures of Satan or the devil, or indeed of demons together with the fires of eternal punishment. Satan is the Hebrew for an “adversary” and not a name. In this case, the adversary is one who opposes God’s will. So Jesus’ death on the cross and his resurrection includes our liberation from the cosmic or universal powers of darkness - Ephesians 6:12.

God is on our side and he makes that real by the word made flesh who shares our nature. As for us, we are sinners, but sin is quite a difficult concept. At the time of the Reformation Christians were worried about transgressions. That means being bad or naughty. The word is used in the new testament, but the more usual word for “sin” is about falling short - αμαρτια rather than παραπτωμα which means transgression. None of us is complete: we are imperfect or we fall ill and we need God’s love.

Because making a mistake or being imperfect is not culpable, asking the Saints to pray for us is not very logical as mistakes or imperfection are less blameworthy than transgression.. The New Testament seems to agree because it says relatively little about forgiveness just as St. Paul writes about reconciliation. The word is καταλλαγω (katallago). It refers to the other with whom we hope to be “make our peace.” The word for forgiveness, αφιημι refers to taking something away, as if it had never happened. We may be tempted by the idea because it is simple. Unfortunately the removal of responsibility and the concomitant non-responsibility also diminished our dignity because we were not responsible for what we do or have done.

The overwhelming majority of human beings are pretty immune from leprosy. It is not a person’s fault that he or she has the disease and it is certainly not punishment by a vengeful god with a small g. It might be a weakness, but then Jesus died to make us more complete, to reconcile and redeem or save us (σωτηρια means salvation). The work of a medical mission is to take part in that process.

Let’s go back to those saints. In Greek they are called the hagioi, which is used for saints but means “holy” as well. That is arguably the real meaning in the best Greek. So, who are all the saints. Well, we are among them. We may not be as good as some of the official ones, but our medicine is better. Veronica tended Jesus on his way to Calvary and in tending the ill or handicapped we do likewise.

So, whether we like Saints who pray for us or not, we are part of that “multitude whom no man has numbered, whose hope was in the word made flesh.” As for being a saint, Veronica tended Jesus on his way to the cross and we should meet human need wherever and whenever we find it. As for the prayers of saints, that is a more open question than sharing the love of God towards those whose failings are not culpable or in sharing his reconciling love to the culpable. We care for people who experience the simple injustice of disease which no one deserves.

James Barnett

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



'The Repair Shop'

Psalm 103:1-14 and Psalm 23:3 "...He restores my soul..."

There's a series of programmes on British TV called 'The Repair Shop', set in an old barn. People bring in items badly in need of repair, and always there are precious memories attached to them, -long-gone relatives, childhood gifts, personal family histories. There are broken vases, beautiful old clocks, mechanical toys, well-loved teddy-bears, antique furniture, damaged paintings, ...the list goes on and on.

In the Repair Shop, the commentator tells us, are "*some of the country's leading crafts-people*": a clock-maker, leatherworker, blacksmith, stained-glass maker, ceramics artist, art repairer, furniture restorer, seamstress, and so on! They get to work on the projects brought in, some in a very poor state of neglect or damage. At the end of each programme the owners return to find their treasured possessions transformed, working perfectly, sometimes shining like new, sometimes restored but with something of the wear and tear of the ages left as a sensitive tribute to history and memory.

The delight and disbelief, tears and gratitude of the owners, seeing their possessions rejuvenated, touch something deeply in me; maybe I can empathise from my own history!

What makes the programme special for me is the craftsmen and women. They ask about the history and memories attached to the items; what they mean to their owners. These experts have a gentle, understanding manner; their expertise and skill are enhanced by a sensitive respect for things, and an empathy for the owners.

But there's another thing that strikes me about the programme: the introduction ends with the phrase: "*...they will resurrect, revive and rejuvenate...*". I'm reminded of the hymn based on *Psalm 103*: "*Praise, my soul, the King of Heaven, to his feet thy tribute bring.. ransomed, healed, restored, forgiven...*" So every time I watch this programme, I think "*That's what God does!*" I think of the familiar words of *Psalm 23*, "*He restores my soul*". It is what our heavenly Father *does*, through the gift and sacrifice of his precious Son and the ongoing work of his Holy Spirit.

But that's not where the comparisons with this TV programme end. The lead craftsman says, "*Everybody has something that means too much to be thrown away...*" I am amazed to think that I mean too much to God to be thrown away. So he redeems, restores, revives, rejuvenates, ...resurrects!

And one more thing about this programme: the crafts-people don't just polish things up! They take them apart, they deep-clean, they unpick every stitch, replace broken and rotten parts to look like new, they make repairs invisible. But the process looks alarming, messy... broken! I thank God that he doesn't do a superficial clean-up on me. As the pilgrim-journey of life continues he breaks, melts, restores, repairs, -he goes deep. It can be messy, painful, heart-and-life-breaking, but the result is transformation, -to be completed when my owner comes to collect me! "*If anyone is in Christ, she or he is a new creation!*"

Praise God for the ultimate 'repair shop' of his kingdom, the all-sufficiency of his redeeming work, and his perfect love, by which you and I "*mean too much to be thrown away*". It's the love that drew salvation's plan.

May God bless each of us in the restorative process!

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



Psalm 79

A psalm of Asaph.

- ¹ O God, the nations have invaded your inheritance;
they have defiled your holy temple,
they have reduced Jerusalem to rubble.
- ² They have left the dead bodies of your servants
as food for the birds of the sky,
the flesh of your own people for the animals of the wild.
- ³ They have poured out blood like water
all around Jerusalem,
and there is no one to bury the dead.
- ⁴ We are objects of contempt to our neighbors,
of scorn and derision to those around us.
- ⁵ How long, LORD? Will you be angry forever?
How long will your jealousy burn like fire?
- ⁶ Pour out your wrath on the nations
that do not acknowledge you,
on the kingdoms
that do not call on your name;
- ⁷ for they have devoured Jacob
and devastated his homeland.
- ⁸ Do not hold against us the sins of past generations;
may your mercy come quickly to meet us,
for we are in desperate need.
- ⁹ Help us, God our Savior,
for the glory of your name;
deliver us and forgive our sins
for your name's sake.
- ¹⁰ Why should the nations say,
"Where is their God?"
Before our eyes, make known among the nations
that you avenge the outpoured blood of your servants.
- ¹¹ May the groans of the prisoners come before you;
with your strong arm preserve those condemned to die.
- ¹² Pay back into the laps of our neighbors seven times
the contempt they have hurled at you, Lord.

¹³Then we your people, the sheep of your pasture,
will praise you forever;
from generation to generation
we will proclaim your praise.



Psalm 80

For the director of music. To the tune of "The Lilies of the Covenant." Of Asaph. A psalm.

¹ Hear us, Shepherd of Israel,
you who lead Joseph like a flock.

You who sit enthroned between the cherubim,
shine forth ² before Ephraim, Benjamin and Manasseh.

Awaken your might;
come and save us.

³ Restore us, O God;
make your face shine on us,
that we may be saved.

⁴ How long, LORD God Almighty,
will your anger smolder
against the prayers of your people?

⁵ You have fed them with the bread of tears;
you have made them drink tears by the bowlful.

⁶ You have made us an object of derision to our neighbors,
and our enemies mock us.

⁷ Restore us, God Almighty;
make your face shine on us,
that we may be saved.

⁸ You transplanted a vine from Egypt;
you drove out the nations and planted it.

⁹ You cleared the ground for it,
and it took root and filled the land.

¹⁰ The mountains were covered with its shade,
the mighty cedars with its branches.

¹¹ Its branches reached as far as the Sea,
its shoots as far as the River.

¹² Why have you broken down its walls
so that all who pass by pick its grapes?

¹³ Boars from the forest ravage it,
and insects from the fields feed on it.

¹⁴ Return to us, God Almighty!

Look down from heaven and see!

Watch over this vine,

¹⁵ the root your right hand has planted,
the son you have raised up for yourself.

¹⁶ Your vine is cut down, it is burned with fire;
at your rebuke your people perish.

¹⁷ Let your hand rest on the man at your right hand,
the son of man you have raised up for yourself.

¹⁸ Then we will not turn away from you;
revive us, and we will call on your name.

¹⁹ Restore us, LORD God Almighty;
make your face shine on us,
that we may be saved.

Authors in Alphabetical Order

Textuarium

Asaph, psalmist	7, 13, 14, 20, 21, 27, 28 October, 2 , 3 November		2 Kings 5	8 October
Bunmi Oluloto	11 October		2 Kings 6,8-17	10 October
Christine Osman	9, 10 October		Psalm 72	6 October
Dan Izzett	2, 3 October		Psalm 73	7 October
David Beazley	2 November		Psalm 74	13 October
Erna Möller	29 October		Psalm 75	14 October
Glynis Forbes	19 October		Psalm 76	20 October
James Barnett	1 November		Psalm 77	21 October
Johan Velema Dr	22, 23, 24, 25, 26 October		Psalm 78	27, 28 October
Marie d'Arnachellum	31 October		Psalm 79	3 November
Otto Kingsley	4 October		Psalm 80	4 November
Pascal Machefer	12 October		Psalm 103,1-14	2 November
Paul du Plessis MD	15, 16, 17, 18 Oct		Psalm 122, 9	9 October
Peter Laubscher	5 October		Proverbs 22,6	18 October
Pradeep and Sarah Failbus	1 October		Jeremiah 1,11-12	11 October
Ruth Butlin MD	30 October		Book of Jonah	2,3 October
Solomon, King of Israel	6 October		Matthew 10,29-31	31 October
Tim Collison	8 October		Matthew 7, 1-23	22 October
			Matthew 25,43	16 October
			Mark 7,24-30	23 October
			Mark 7,34-36	12 October
			Mark 8,13-21	25 October
			Mark 14-21	24 October
			Mark 8,34-38	26 October
			Luke 7,9	1 October
			John 6,27	15 October
			John 15,2	5 October
			John 15,13-15	4 October
			John 20,28	29 October
			Ephesians 4,1-16	19 October
			Ephesians 6,19-22	30 October
			Revelations 21,5	17 October