

Actual intro to the month of April

A very kind mail reached me a couple of days ago from Australia, from Mary Edgar.

Mary is the widow of the late Bill Edgar (1942-1992) who served TLM and the world of leprosy in many different roles. From 1987 until his early death due to serious illness in 1992 Bill was the general director of TLM. Bill and Mary are both fondly remembered by many of us.

This is what Mary wrote:

“May I share the following from the World Community of Christian Meditation:

Laurence Freeman OSB, an excerpt from “Thursday Lenten Reflection,” Week 3, March 19, 2020, posted at www.wccm.org

Sometimes, when we are forced into something and feel imprisoned by a coldly impersonal, external force, we may burn up in rage at it or go into depression. And yet sometimes, just sometimes if we are fortunate, the experience of being compelled liberates us into new and surprising views of reality. We encounter something unexpected, a hidden grace that could not otherwise have been able to find us.

As in meditation, there are times when we sit in a desert, dry and endlessly distracted by our anxieties or losses. An empty desolation stretches as far as we can feel in every direction. Better, we think, to do something useful or self-indulgent. The solitude is not the open space in which we feel connected to a greater whole but aloneness, constriction, abandonment or the feeling of being forgotten. The spectre of affliction haunts our soul.

Then from an inner point, without location, an invisible ray of light touches and restores our shriveled soul to life and hope. Not that all our wishes are fulfilled, in fact none of them may be, and the pain or loss may still be only too present. But a joy emerges that opens a pathway to the source of being, our being.

After meditation: “Everyone Sang” by Siegfried Sassoon, pub. 1919, in the public domain.

EVERYONE SANG

*Everyone suddenly burst out singing;
And I was filled with such delight
As prisoned birds must find in freedom
Winging wildly across the white
Orchards and dark green fields; on; on; and out of sight.*

*Everyone's voice was suddenly lifted,
And beauty came like the setting sun.
My heart was shaken with tears and horror
Drifted away ... O but every one
Was a bird; and the song was wordless; the singing will never be done.*

Blessings
Mary”

Thank you, Mary, for you ongoing love and prayers for TLM!



Gratitude

1 Thess 5:18 Give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

1944. Several women are being transported to Ravensbrück, a concentration camp in Germany during World War II. Among them two Dutch women, two sisters, Corrie en Betsie ten Boom. Shortly after arriving they start meetings for the women for Bible study and prayer, secretly, because that is forbidden. Betsie, always aiming for the positive, practices the text from 1 Thess 5, by thanking God for everything they do have: them being together, and so many women in the barack where they stay, so they can share the Gospel with so many people. And she thanks God for the flees, present in multitudes in their barack. Corrie protests: 'I will not thank God for the flees!' But Bettie insists: 'all circumstances means all circumstances.' Later somebody hears two of the guards talk about this particular barack: because of the flees they never enter this barack, afraid of being contaminated. So Betsie en Corrie can have their meetings undisturbedly, because of the flees. Thank you Lord for the flees!

Gratitude. Researchers have recently discovered that truly felt gratitude changes our brains, so that they produce more neurotransmitters like dopamine, which is connected with reward, and serotonin, which protects from depression. And even our neocortex functions better by gratitude. Is that not interesting? What the Bible tells us, and is written more than 2000 years ago, can now be confirmed by science. Great is our God!

The above I wrote to inspire us to be thankful, as the text from 1 Thess. 5: 18 tells us to be. So how can we practise gratitude?

First by taking time to stand still and observe, think and conclude. For example: nature, do you observe its beauty, the changing of the seasons, the birds in the sky, the colours of a sunset, the rainbow when rain and sun are together and do you realize who made this? Or by eating fruit like an apple and sensing how it tastes, smells and feels. But also how it grows, and that the one apple you eat bears the potential of many new appletrees? And when you realize it, are you thankful?

Secondly, by standing still every day and looking for at least one thing you can be thankful for and thank God for that. Try it for a month, and discover how it changes your perspective.

Thirdly....I think you are creative enough to find your own ways of practising gratitude!

Hannie Stehouwer, medical doctor, board member with the Leprosy Mission the Netherlands. *I am a board member with leprosy Mission the Netherlands since 8 years. I was trained as a medical doctor and after my training my husband and I went for 7 years to Chad, Africa, to serve in a community development programme with a national church in health and agriculture. Since returning I teach nurses pathology. I am 61 years old now, married, with 2 children and 3 grandchildren*



Persevering in the fullness of life

In the TLM International Office in Brentford every day I have been greeted by the following scripture on the wall as I enter the main office floor: *John 10:10 "I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full."* What a great way to start the working day!

Now, many things can get in the way of enjoying the fullness of life that our loving God has in store for us; but it's worth fixing our eyes on the perfecter of our faith and asking Him what does fullness of life look like for us today. What does fullness of life look like in our working day; what does it look like in our family and in our relationships with our friends; what does it look like in our churches, in our local communities? Take a moment now, in the quiet of your heart to ask these questions.

Our God's love for us is unimaginably vast and so there's surely no limit to the answers to those questions. However, it's true that sometimes we take our eye off His promises for us and get distracted by the tough times that we can face. Many of us in TLM face tough challenges; perhaps a lack of funding or support, disagreements with our colleagues, unexpected changes, the departure of familiar faces and even persecution in our wider societies. I don't want to underplay how real these are, or the emotions of fear, anxiety or caution they can generate, but let us encourage one another to hold onto the promises our God has given us. *"The Lord himself will lead you and be with you. He will not fail you or abandon you, so do not lose courage or be afraid."* Deuteronomy 31:8 and *"Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever."* Hebrews 13:8.

We have seen this to be true throughout the history of the TLM and these promises will help us to persevere; persevere in living our lives for God, persevere in striving for the mission and vision of leprosy defeated and lives transformed that God has given TLM. I am about to take up a new job with a different charity, but I don't feel that I am leaving TLM. It's too special an organisation, too special a group of wonderful faithful people, too special of a mission. On a personal level I will be a supporter in a new way and expect to stay close to TLM. So I feel able to remind us of God's call to persevere in fulfilling the vision. *"Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith."* Hebrews 12:1

In reflecting on this scripture I was led to look back at the history of TLM. Over the past 150 years just imagine how many hundreds of thousands of people have served, worked, often far from home, volunteered, given generously of their time and finances, got on their knees in prayer, dressed wounds, made cups of tea, provided a comforting word or a needed hug, shared the good news in word and deed, fought for acceptance and changes in the law, baked cakes to raise money, shaped a new limb to restore movement, carried out complex surgery, spoken in churches, patiently supported people affected by leprosy to bring about change in their communities, broken barriers of stigma and exclusion, painstakingly researched new advances in the cure and treatment of leprosy, driven cars over bumpy roads to reach remote communities, encouraged someone to take up a new livelihood, taught a class, written a new proposal for funding, answered the telephones, and yes, even cleaned the toilets. How many have persevered; simply by showing up for work or for service day after day after day? Please don't underestimate the power of showing up and getting on with the mission before us.

That Hebrews passage describes us running the race in front of a crowd of witnesses. I think that's what we are doing in TLM. Others have gone before us and others will come after us. New faces will be added to those already familiar to us. All of these hundreds of thousands are our cloud of witnesses. They are surrounding the race course and grouped around the finish line, cheering us on. Don't be daunted by the huge crowds, they are there to support and encourage us; they are on our side. Imagine now that we are running under a banner. Our founder Wellesley Bailey said we march (or run!) under the banner of our Lord and his banner is love. Running the race (as our mission statement says) to "break the chains of leprosy, empower people to attain healing, dignity and life in all its fullness".

So keep on going, keep on running the race, keep on supporting, keep on showing up, keep on until leprosy is truly defeated, keep on showing God's love to those around you. As you do so, I pray that the eyes of your heart will be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which He has called you, the riches of His glorious inheritance in His holy people, and His incomparably great power for us who believe. Amen

Pete Garratt — Head of Operations Support TLM



Testimony of Julian Urban, 38, doctor in Lombardy

"Even in the darkest nightmares, I never imagined that I could see and experience what has been happening here in our hospital for three weeks. The nightmare flows on, the river becomes more and more. At first some came, then dozens, then hundreds and now we are no longer doctors, but we have become sorters of the record, and we decide who should live and who should be sent home to die, even if all these people have paid Italian taxes all their lives.

Until two weeks ago, my colleagues and I were atheists; it was normal because we are doctors and we learned that science excludes the presence of God. I always laughed at my parents who went to church.

Nine days ago, a 75-year-old pastor came to see us. He was a nice man, he had serious breathing problems but had a Bible with him and he impressed us when he read it to the dying and held them by the hand.

When we had time to listen to him; we were all tired, discouraged, psychologically and physically overwhelmed doctors. Now we have to admit that as human beings we have reached our limits, we cannot do more and yet more and more people are dying every day. And we are exhausted, we have two colleagues who died and others were infected. We realized that where man can no longer do anything, we need God and we have started to ask him for help when we have a few minutes left.

We speak among ourselves: we cannot believe that we were convinced atheists and that we are now every day in search of our peace, asking the Lord to help us to resist so that we can take care of the sick.

The 75-year-old pastor died yesterday.

Despite more than 120 dead in 3 weeks, when we were all exhausted, destroyed, he had managed, despite these conditions and our difficulties, to bring us PEACE that we no longer hoped to find. The shepherd went to the Lord, and soon we will follow him too if the situation continues like this.

I haven't been home for 6 days, I don't know when I last ate, I realize how useless I am on this earth and I want to take my last breath to help others.

I am happy to have returned to God, while I am surrounded by the suffering and death of my fellow men. "

Testimony collected by Gianni Giardinelli

Kindly forwarded by Claudie Guignard-Chollet and Eric Chollet



New Norm – Part 1

Study 1 The whole world changed in two weeks!

- The way we are going to be having church for the foreseeable future changed in one week! The New Norm has pushed us back to the future! We're having Church like they did nearly 2000 years ago! The Church, you and I will not be meeting as a congregation in a build on the Enterprise road! We've gone back to where The Church started in the believers homes! That's where we are now, in the homes of the believers!

Organic Church! So often church services can be treated as entertainment centres Home churches don't allow that. It's a face to face, heart to heart, brother to brother, sister to sister, family to family.

The Church in live action! The Church living out as "The forever family" on earth! Practicing for heaven! When The Church was birthed, worldwide revival started. This is how some people saw it: *Acts 17:6 NKJV These who have turned the world upside down have come here too.* Maybe it's time for us to do it again! The starting place is in "The Home"! Could we call it: The Base@home Let's build a scripture base. *Acts 2.46 : 5.42 : 8:3 : 10.2 : 12.12 : 16.32 : 16.40 : 18:7 : 20:20 Romans 16.5 1 Corinthians 16.19 Colossians 4.15 Philemon 1.2 Acts 2:42-43, 46-47 ...They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. ...Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favour of all the people. "And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved." Day after day, in the temple courts and from house to house, they never stopped teaching and proclaiming the good news that Jesus is the Messiah." Acts 5:42 NIVUK But Saul began to destroy the church. Going from house to house, he dragged off both men and women and put them in prison. Acts 8:3 NIVUK*

It sounds like it's fun being in peoples homes! It's a safe place where:

What then shall we say, brothers and sisters? When you come together, each of you has a hymn, or a word of instruction, a revelation, a tongue or an interpretation. Everything must be done so that the church may be built up. (1 Corinthians 14:26 NIVUK)

This is the time to learn and become an active part of the Body of Christ!

Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. For we were all baptised by one Spirit so as to form one body – whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free – and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. And so the body is not made up of one part but of many. ...Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it. (1 Corinthians 12:12-14, 27 NIVUK)

Talk 2 BASE CHURCH@HOME

The Church meeting in homes! Back to the future, as it was 2000 years ago! There's a real comforting feeling about that! I think it makes this statement: I care for you & am prepared to open my heart & home to you. I want you to be part of my life.

In *Acts 12* there is this great story of Peter when an angel rescued him from jail: *When this had dawned on him, he went to the house of Mary the mother of John, also called Mark, where many people had gathered and were praying. Peter knocked at the outer entrance, and a servant named Rhoda came to answer the door. When she recognised Peter's voice, she was so overjoyed she ran back without opening it and exclaimed, 'Peter is at the door!' In a house setting where the saints are praying the impossible happens!*

There is every possibility they were praying for Peter in jail! God heard & answered! In unity they were their brothers keeper! *Romans 12:4-5 For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.* Let's think about what this means to us. We are members of one another. We belong together. You are not here for you. You are here for everyone else here who needs your encouragement, display of faith, work of love, and support. Being members of one another means we do not neglect each other. It means that we do for each other even when we are tired or it is uncomfortable or inconvenient. We must not think about ourselves. We must think of ourselves as a body that is joined together, one with another.

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.



New Norm – Part 2

Talk 3 BASE CHURCH @ HOME!

“Am I my brothers keeper?” Do I have a responsibility towards my brother?

As many of you know Babs & I are involved in ministry to people who suffer from the disease called leprosy. The parts of the body that are most affected are people’s hands & feet They loose the ability to feel pain, hot or cold, sharp or blunt, rough or smooth. This frequently results in damage to their hands & feet - even to loosing limbs because of infection resulting in an amputation. So we teach sufferers to inspect their limbs each day in case of a problem. Thus preventing serious or further damage to their bodies. Hands & eyes rubbing & looking for potential problems. I am my brothers keeper! *...But in fact God has placed the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. If they were all one part, where would the body be? As it is, there are many parts, but one body. The eye cannot say to the hand, ‘I don’t need you!’ And the head cannot say to the feet, ‘I don’t need you!’ 1 Cor 12:18-21* The human body works together as a unit for its wellbeing.

So Paul teaches us, the body of Christ, the Church needs to work together for its wellbeing. *The eye cannot say to the hand, ‘I don’t need you!’ And the head cannot say to the feet, ‘I don’t need you!’ Read 1 Cor 12* As a member of The Body of Christ; The Bride of Jesus: I cannot say “I don’t need you”! I need you - you need me!

Yes: I am my brothers keeper! You are my keeper! Leprosy patients engage all that they have to take care of their damaged bodies, they max-out to get the best & most appropriate care for themselves. Oh, how we need each other!

Am I my brothers keeper? Yes! Let’s pray!

Talk 4

Am I my brothers keeper! Yes! What does that mean? Paul in Romans gives us a number of clues: *Romans 12:9-10, 16 ...Be devoted to one another in love.* These are other words that can be used for “devoted” faithful, true, staunch, steadfast, constant, committed, dedicated This means that I really care for you!

To do this I need to get to know you & you need to let me into your life!

To do this ..you need to trust me & I have to be trustworthy

We have to keep each other’s confidences. This means no gossiping.

The second part to this verse is: *“Honour (acclaim) one another above yourselves”.* It’s you before me! Let me open the door for you! I will make you more important than me... Can be a tricky situation & requires a very controlled balancing walk. It can be easily abused.

The next part *...Live in harmony with one another.* I think I understand the word harmony in a musical way, which is the combination of simultaneously sounded musical notes to produce a pleasing effect This is what I’m my brothers keeper is.

A pleasing effect

- To each other & to all who observe us
- The way we act & treat each other

- The way we talk to & about each other
- No pushing in
- True brothers in every sense
- This takes our whole life, everything we do! My responsibility in this is to understand what causes disharmony. Between the different genders. The differences in our various cultures & family practices. It means being extremely patient with one another & allowing for our differences without being bent out of shape. So far 3 thoughts: *devoted. above yourselves. harmony.* Three ways to be your brothers keeper!

Am I my brothers keeper! Yes!

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.



Give me this drink

“A spring of water welling up to eternal life.” John 4: 7-15

We are living in difficult times indeed. The current mood of brothers and sisters all over the world is the gripping fear with so much attention given to the ravaging scourge of Coronavirus disease. This like other human plagues from history is no respecter of persons and at present there exist more devastation to the high and mighty than the low. Everyone is left as scared than they ever have. My confident mind will just quickly run to what is recorded in *Matt 8: 23-27, “Then He got up, rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was great calm.”* The whole world is standing terrified over this strange and sudden disaster. It could be crying loud to our God who watches over His own. This storm will be calmed to be still, in no time. Because our faith is far beyond our fear!

This season of Easter which celebrates the death and resurrection of Christ our Lord acknowledges our individual and collective freedom from such pain prevailing on the planet earth. Building up from the Lenten season affords us the opportunity to deliberately recognize those who are in need of the basic necessities of life like food and water, just to survive. There are those who seek beyond the minimum but to enjoy the other good things of life. When a person is in need he becomes vulnerable and people can easily take advantage of him. So when need is in the middle one can be on either side of the coin.

How do we treat people in need? Three lessons can be drawn from the encounter the Samaritan woman had with Jesus Christ at the well in Samaria as recorded in *John 4: 5-42*. Firstly, when Jesus asked her for water, she looked for several reasons to deny Him of her help like beliefs, culture, tribe, race and other factors that encourage discrimination today. Secondly the woman did not know who the person asking her for water was. When she realized who she was talking to, am sure she became more than willing to give even more than water. Thirdly, many needs may not manifest just in the physical, some needs are more of spiritual.

Nevertheless, the bigger picture remains unchanged as this devotional situates. Jesus calmed the storm of water and welled up the spring of water. He did these to restore our faith in His power over nature and provide us with His drink so we never thirst again! These are times when the world is on its knees, looking helpless and diminished in confidence of faith in God. We all are needing Jesus to come to our aid and keep the world safe for us to live in, irrespective of whether we are deserving or not. His enduring word keeps us spiritually nourished to sustain our faith in Him. This of course implies physical decorum in the world, our dwelling place, and staying alive to proclaiming His Grace and infinite mercies.

Let's cheer up and live on, as our God, the creator of the universe, is alive and is on the throne!

We could pray thus:

Lord, I ask for this drink; fill me until I thirst no more and continually reap from the many blessings that abound in You. Jesus, I trust in You.

Moses Onoh, MD, is a former Country Leader of TLM Nigeria. He is currently with the World Health Organization; serving as a National Professional Officer and supports the control of Tuberculosis, Leprosy/NTDs and other communicable Diseases in Nigeria.



The baptism of Jesus – Part 1

Why did Jesus ask John to baptize him? I invite you to read *Matthew 3.13-17*

13 Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptized by John. 14 But John tried to deter him, saying, “I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?”

It’s not possible, Jesus the Messiah doesn’t need the baptism of John, the baptism for repentance (Matthew 3.11).

John knew certain things about Jesus (they were from the same family) but as it is written in John 1.31 “I myself did not know him”, it seems like they haven’t met yet.

There is a difference between knowing things about Jesus or knowing him personally. Do I know Jesus personally, am I in a relationship with him?

15 Jesus replied, “Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness.” Then John consented.

To fulfill all righteousness: what allows someone to be in a good relationship with God.

Jesus doesn’t speak about the baptism but about the cross. He announces the cross - his mission, the reason why he came to earth.

In other words, Jesus said to John: you can’t prevent it, I must go through it, this is how we want to restore the relationship with humans.

“For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.”
(Colossians 1.19-20)

As you read these verses, find the 7 verbs:

16 As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting on him.

17 And a voice from heaven said, *“This is my Son, whom I love, with him I am well pleased.”*

Do you see the Trinity in this passage?

God - Father, Son and Holy Spirit reveals himself, God announces the cross.

Remember Jesus said in verse 15: it is proper for us - for us as Trinity.

Jesus was *baptized*: he immerses himself in water, where he should not have gone because he is without sin, but he did it for me, for you; he took upon himself the sins that we confess.

With this symbolic act, Jesus immerses us in the message of the cross - evil has been overcome and we can be set free.

Jesus *went up* out of the water as later he will come out of the tomb – it’s a prophetic announcement of his resurrection.



The baptism of Jesus – Part 2

Matthew 3.16.17 At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting on him. And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, whom I love, with him I am well pleased."

Heaven was *opened* (he saw heaven being torn open Mark 1.10 – the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom Matthew 27.51): the access to God is open.

What can I learn from this?

Even if the confession of sins (symbolized by the baptism of John) is an important step in my daily life, as the access to God is open, it's essential to be in a close relationship with God every day.

He *saw* the Spirit of God *descending* like a dove and *lighting* on him.

Jesus said in John 16.14: "The Holy Spirit will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you."

I don't know about you but I was thinking why a dove?

The dove is the symbol of peace (the peace found again with God, the reconciliation), and the symbol of purity.

But doesn't that remind you of the dove Noah sent after the flood?

After the judgment, a new earth emerges, it is the "recreation" (as when God gathered the water and let dry ground appear - Genesis 1.9-10).

The dove is the sign that Jesus invites me to live a new life in him.

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!"

(2 Corinthians 5.17)

And a voice from heaven said, *"This is my Son, whom I love, with him I am well pleased."*

The voice from heaven is God the Father.

At the cross, evil and death are disarmed and we receive grace and new life in Christ through the Holy Spirit, and the Father tells us: "This is my son, whom I love, with him I am well pleased / This is my daughter, whom I love, with her I am well pleased."

"We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life." (Romans 6.4)

- My new identity in Christ and the love of the Father are the foundations of my life.

The baptism of Jesus marked the beginning of his mission, Jesus came to die for us and he is risen in order to allow us to be part of his family.

At the end of his mission on earth, the Risen leaves us his project in Matthew 29.18-20: make disciples of all nations (disciples are people who follow and imitate Jesus in their lifestyle). How:

- By going – we are called to meet others motivated by the love received from God (in such times we have to be creative in the way we meet others!),

- By baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit – we may think of water baptism: the public sign of our choice to follow Jesus, to become Jesus' disciple, but is it this kind of baptism?

In the name of: - in the Bible the name is the person, so we are called to baptize them in the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, to immerse them in the relationship with God - Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

We are called to help others to grow in their relationship with God. But before we are able to help others, it's good to experience it ourselves!

- By teaching them to obey everything Jesus has commanded.

In conclusion, whatever we face remember Jesus never said life would be easy, he has done everything so we can have a new life, and he promised his presence:

“And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” Amen

Anne-Claude Jonah - With TLM since 2011. Leader for the French part of Switzerland.



The Calvary Conversation Part 1

- it's never too late to be Saved by Grace!

The 3 men at Calvary

On the Calvary hill when Jesus had submitted himself to God's will to be the atoning sacrifice for the sins of mankind, He was not alone. Two thieves/criminals were also crucified on His either side. The gospels record neither their names nor their offences. Since crucifixion was the punishment for most serious of crimes in those days, we presume that their transgressions under the law were grave. They were condemned under the law to horrific deaths. To Calvary they carried their crosses of sin against God and Man. But Jesus had carried to Calvary the Cross of man's sin against God.

By recording the conversation of the criminals with Jesus, the scriptures are conveying a magnificent message embedded in their dialogue with the Messiah, Jesus Christ. God is pouring out His heart on salvation through faith and grace in the context of two mortal sinners and one sinless Lamb of God. Jesus often used parables to illustrate and contextualize His teaching, including one on grace and salvation (The Parable of the Lost Son, Luke 15:11-32). In the salvation story at Calvary, it was an incident of real life/time salvation, as real as it can ever be.

Your understanding leads to your actions

From the conversation of the two criminals, we can presume that they were aware/curious/puzzled by the person of Jesus. They saw how the weeping women, roman soldiers, Jews, disciples, Mary, John, teachers of the law, chief priests and others had reacted to Jesus hanging on the cross. Their understanding of Jesus was distinctly different, diametrically opposite.

For one criminal Jesus was only a temporal Jewish king/ruler, possibly influenced by the "This is the King of the Jews" sign the Roman soldiers had placed on the cross to which Jesus was nailed (Luke 23:38). Since a worldly king must have the power to command things to happen, he challenged Jesus to demonstrate His powers by getting Himself and he, off the cross. He mocked at the divinity of Jesus ("Aren't you the Christ? Luke 23:39). In his view Jesus had failed as a king; Jesus had no real power. He had possibly cursed Jesus for doing nothing to rescue him from his physical agony and imminent death on the cross. He did not realise that the Cross was the very purpose for which Jesus came into our world. He refused to repent or confess to his sins of disobedience and wrongdoings. For him physical survival was all that mattered. He wanted the life his way, not God's way.

The other criminal had recognised the sinless life of Jesus and also his own sins (*Luke 23:41*). He heard Jesus praying to God for forgiveness for those who crucified Him, which only a person with divine anointing can do. He caught a glimpse of Jesus' deity as the Son of God, a transcendental king of heavens who should be revered (Luke 23: 40, 42). He rejoiced that in Jesus, he would have a blessed future; doors for eternal life will open. He looked forward to a new spiritual life. He accepted the sins he had committed in this world and the rightful punishment meted out to him (Luke 23:41). He asked for mercy from Jesus for his sins. He could have asked for life, or relief from his agony. But he sought the Kingdom of God. He trusted Christ even when he saw Him dying the death of a criminal like himself. That was a noble act of faith, a crucified man trusting a

crucified Christ! He exalted Christ at the time when Christ faced His deepest humiliation. When all other voices were silent, he witnessed for Christ as the Saviour.

The one who saw deity in Jesus gave control of his spirit to the Spirit of God. Seeking forgiveness for one's sins requires humility and courage. One criminal's eyes were blinded by Satan while the other's spirit was awakened by God. He was convicted of his sinfulness. Both of them sought deliverance from their situation, but in diametrically opposite ways. One looked for this world and the other, eternity. One saw in Jesus the Saviour, Son of God, forgiver of sins and the other a fake, powerless and failed king.

For His glory, in gratitude.

Dr PLN Raju - Former Director (Resource Mobilization) The Leprosy Mission Trust India New Delhi



The Calvary Conversation Part 2.

- it's never too late to be Saved by Grace!

Choices have consequences

Every choice we make is the outcome of a thought. Our every choice whether made by the leading of the Spirit of God or by the spirit of man, will have consequences. What is reaped is what one has sown.

In the lives of the two criminals their understanding of and approach to Jesus had led to different outcomes. With anger and frustration in his heart, one criminal had died in agony and distress while the other had faced excruciating pain in death on the cross but with the hope of eternal life in Christ Jesus. Spirit of God had convicted one to turn to Christ and receive His love, mercy and grace. But the spirit of man/Satan condemned/blinded the other criminal from submitting to the love and grace of Jesus. Both were sinners in the world; one was saved by God and the other not, because of their free will choices.

The penitent thief saw great value in his soul being saved. He had repented for his sins, had a change of heart and was resurrected in the Spirit by God. His soul was saved and received eternal life in paradise (*Luke 23:43*). Salvation was bestowed when a simple prayer of mercy was prayed by him. He asked to be remembered and not forgotten by Jesus when He returns to His kingdom (*Luke 23:42*). It is a statement of faith in response to the understanding he got. The desire to be saved that emanated from the depths of his heart had moved the heart of Jesus. It is the humility, confession of sin and seeking deliverance through Jesus made God pour out His mercy on him. *The thief humbled himself, and Jesus exalted him.*

His supplication was granted without delay because of the earnestness in that criminal's plea. *Jesus stated "today" he would be in paradise emphasizing the immediacy of salvation. Grace is receiving what a sinner does not deserve. Of the two thieves on their crosses, one rejected Jesus and received what he deserved: justice, hopelessness, death and separation from God forever. The other received what he did not deserve: grace, forgiveness of sins and eternal fellowship with Jesus in paradise.*

A truly repentant heart is what Jesus seeks. Jesus forgave all the repentant criminal's acts of disobedience. The heinous crimes that he had committed thus far counted no more, they were set aside. How far and how long ago he went away from God did not matter. His sins were washed away by the blood Jesus had shed on the Cross. *Faith in Jesus, the Saviour saved his soul. An amazing demonstration of God's grace for a sinner right at the Cross on Calvary hill!*

Some insights

God had orchestrated the Calvary Conversation as part of His plan of salvation for mankind. It was fulfilment of the prophesy (*Isaiah 53:12*) and direction for future generations. Jesus was crucified but that did not invalidate the Saviour in him. God has shown that salvation is a free gift through faith in Jesus Christ. God is searching for seekers of salvation. It is never too late to come to the saving grace of Jesus Christ. However far away one has drifted from God; however grave is one's sin/disobedience; however dire is one's life situation; they are all subsumed in God's love when we seek His mercy. For every grievous sin (disobedience), there is redemption in Jesus for a repentant heart. True conversion-authentic change-must start in the heart.

The Lord is waiting with open arms for us to come to His mercy seat. Let the Holy Spirit convict us to approach God's throne of grace with reverence. Satan cannot control us if we don't give him control. God gave us the free will to receive or reject salvation. The humble receive it but the proud reject it.

I cry for His mercy, "remember me despite all my transgressions, wash my sins with your blood"!

For His glory, in gratitude.

Dr PLN Raju - Former Director (Resource Mobilization) The Leprosy Mission Trust India New Delhi



Holy Saturday is in several different ways celebrated in the different traditions of the Church. Total silence is one of these, no sermon or communion, expressing that Jesus laid that day in the grave. In other practices one of the oratorios of J.S.Bach is performed, as summary of Jesus' journey from the via dolorosa up to the glory of Easter.

I recommend this year this second one for the TLM Family worldwide: to take time and listen the entire magnificent oratorio Saint John Passion in the brilliant historical-style interpretation of the English Baroque Soloists and the Monteverdi Choir, founded and led by Sir John Eliot Gardiner.

Sung in German of course, but with English subtitles...

Can be reached through this link:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dd_Ak6OONk

Enjoy, remember, and worship!

Marta

J. S. Bach:

Johannes-Passion BWV 245

English Translation in Interlinear Format
Saint John Passion BWV 245

The *Passio secundum Joannem* or *St John Passion* (German: *Johannes-Passion*), BWV 245, is a Passion or oratorio by Johann Sebastian Bach, the older of the surviving Passions by Bach. It was written during Bach's first year as director of church music in Leipzig and was first performed on April 7, 1724, at Good Friday Vespers at the St. Nicholas Church.

The final chorus and chorale are for leading your prayerful thoughts today:

39. Chorus

Flauto traverso I/II, Oboe I/II, Violino I/II, Viola, Continuo

Ruht wohl, ihr heiligen Gebeine,

Rest in peace, you sacred limbs,

Die ich nun weiter nicht beweine,

I shall weep for you no more,

Ruht wohl und bringt auch mich zur Ruh!

rest in peace, and bring me also to rest.

Das Grab, so euch bestimmet ist

The grave that is allotted to you

Und ferner keine Not umschließt,
and contains no further suffering,
Macht mir den Himmel auf und schließt die Hölle zu.
opens heaven for me and shuts off hell.

40. Chorale

*Flauto traverso I e Oboe I e Violino I col Soprano, Flauto traverso II e Oboe II e Violino II coll'Alto, Viola col
Tenore, Continuo*

Ach Herr, lass dein lieb Engelein
Ah Lord, let your dear angels
Am letzten End die Seele mein
at my final hour carry my soul
In Abrahams Schoß tragen,
to Abraham's bosom,
Den Leib in seim Schlafkämmerlein
while my body in its narrow chamber
Gar sanft ohn eigne Qual und Pein
gently without pain or torment
Ruhn bis am jüngsten Tage!
rests until the last day.
Alsdenn vom Tod erwecke mich,
Wake me then from death,
Dass meine Augen sehen dich
so that my eyes see you
In aller Freud, o Gottes Sohn,
in all joy, o God's son,
Mein Heiland und Genadenthron!
my saviour and throne of mercy
Herr Jesu Christ, erhöre mich,
Lord Jesus Christ, hear me,
Ich will dich preisen ewiglich!
I shall praise you eternally!



The Easter Message of HOPE

Someone once wrote: Totally without HOPE one cannot live. To live without HOPE is to cease to live. And I believe there is a great deal of truth in those words.

In the difficult and often confusing world in which we live today, HOPE for many people, is something that seems to be short supply. In fact, I would even go so far as to say that in the world of pain, rejection, grief & sorrow, of complex family relationships, of problems at work, alongside many other hardships of life causing sadness, loneliness and depression – HOPE – for many people, has died a death.

But HOPE, I believe, is one of the key Christian attributes and one of the most important gifts we can give to the world today.

Nothing brings HOPE back to life like Easter. For the Easter message gives us HOPE in a bewildering world and HOPE to face the uncertainties of the future. This special day never arrives without its refreshing reminder that there is life beyond this one. TRUST LIFE, ETERNAL LIFE, GLORIOUS LIFE. Those who live on the "outside" of hope need an injection of HOPE (a HOPE transfusion perhaps!) and Easter certainly gives it.

The Easter message is well known – there is no need to prolong it, complicate it or try to explain or defend it.

The fact speaks for themselves:

- ❖ *Jesus said HE would be in the heart of the earth for three days and nights (Mathew 12:40)*
- ❖ *Later HE said HE would sufferbe killed and be raised up on the third day (Mathew 16.21)*
- ❖ *Betrayal by Judas. He was placed under arrest, hurriedly pushed through several trials and declared guilty – first of blasphemy and then of treason (Luke 22:70, 23: 24)*
- ❖ *Finally, all the disciples left Him and fled (Matthew 26:56)*
- ❖ *Alone and forsaken, He endured the torture of scourging, the humiliation of insults and mockery and the agony of that walk to Golgotha (Mark 15:15-22)*
- ❖ *The horrors of crucifixion followed, leaving Him suspended for six excruciating hours - the last three of which were spent in eerie darkness that fell over the whole land (Mark 15:33).*
- ❖ *Then - He died. (Matthew 27:50; Mark 15:37; Luke 23:46; John 19:30)*
- ❖ *Two men, Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus, took Him down from the cross, prepared the body for burial and placed it in the garden in a new tomb. (John 19:38-41)*
- ❖ *Because He had predicted, after three days I am to rise again, the chief priests and the Pharisees had the tomb secured by a large stone, set a seal on the stone, and arranged for a Roman guard to watch over the tomb. (Matthew 27:62-66)*
- ❖ *Before dawn on the third day, a miracle occurred. When astonished people visited the tomb that morning, they found the stone rolled away and the body gone. They were asked by angels, why do you seek the living One among the dead? He is not here, but He has risen just as He said. (Luke 24:5-6; Matthew 28:6)*

I cannot fully explain all that happened on that first Easter day in this short column, but the simple fact is that there is something magnificent, therapeutic and reassuring about Easter morning - HOPE. And this hope in the resurrected Christ silences the empty message of sceptics and cynics alike. How? Because the

evidence of the resurrected Christ can be found in the testimony of many thousands of people who have had their lives transformed by the indwelling presence of Jesus through a personal trust and faith in Him.

Our identity, at this time of Easter celebration, is strengthened as we stand together and proclaim: Alleluia! Christ is risen - He is risen indeed. Alleluia! This HOPE can be with us every moment of our life.

The prayer of St. Patrick (whom we remembered on March 17th) puts it into a much better perspective than I ever could:

Christ be with me, Christ before me, Christ behind me, Christ in me, Christ beneath me, Christ above me, Christ on my right, Christ on my left, Christ where I lie, Christ where I sit, Christ where I arise, Christ in the heart of every one who thinks of me, Christ in the mouth of every one who speaks of me, Christ in every eye that sees me, Christ in every ear that hears me. Salvation is of the Lord, Salvation is of the Lord, Salvation is of the Christ, may your salvation, O Lord, be ever with us. Amen.

A HOPE transfusion awaits us, it happens every Easter Sunday - make sure you don't miss it this year.

It's guaranteed to change your life!

With every blessing in Jesus' precious name

Dorothy Owen - Administration Department for The Leprosy Mission Papua New Guinea



Being a follower of Jesus in a time of fear

Thank you for being a supporter of people affected by leprosy. We know you may very well be concerned about the current situation. We've been through bushfires, floods, and now are wrestling with the implications of what COVID-19 will mean for Australia, and globally. Your support for people affected by leprosy has always encouraged us, and strengthened us in our faith. We have been praying for our supporters in this time. We also wanted to offer you this short devotional series, with the hope it will provide encouragement to you during this time.

We hope it provides some reflections on some of the concerns you may be facing.

- Is God really in control?
- How do I find peace in this difficult situation?
- What's my duty as a follower of Jesus in a time like this?

We are thankful for your love and care for people affected by leprosy. On behalf of the Board and staff of The Leprosy Mission Australia please know you are in our prayers, and in our thoughts at this time.

Tim Collison, on behalf of The Leprosy Mission Australia Team.

P.S – Please feel free to share this, or copy parts of it.

Part 1: The Name of God

Passage: Exodus 3:1-14

This passage finds Moses in reduced circumstances. He was a prince; now he is a shepherd. He was a ruler, now he herds sheep. But God uses those circumstances to draw Moses to himself. Being a shepherd meant he was alone. Being a shepherd meant he knew the value of fire on cold nights. God finds Moses in difficult circumstances and speaks to him.

This is a rich passage, but three particular messages stand out. "I have seen the misery of my people" (v 7). "You will worship God on this mountain" (v 12). "God said to Moses 'I AM WHO I AM'" (v 14). We can know three things about God from this:

1. He sees and knows what his people and the world are going through. He is not absent. He hears our prayers (v 7). He also knows of your present needs. He is also aware of the situation for people affected by leprosy.
2. God has a plan to see us through this (v 12). Even before Moses arrived in Egypt, God was telling him the end result. Moses would be back where he was. But he would not be alone. He would be accompanied by all God's people. God has a plan for you, those close to you, and for people affected by leprosy.
3. God has not left us alone, and will be with us (v 14). This is what "I AM WHO I AM" means: 'being creator and sustainer of all that exists and thus the God of both creation and history, all that is and all that is happening – a God active and present in historical affairs' (Stuart, *Exodus*, 2006)

Reflection

Take a moment to write down some things you know about the goodness of God in past years. Be thankful.

Prayer (Borrowed from an Australian Prayer Book, Friday Evening Prayers)

Heavenly Father, In darkness and in light, in trouble and in joy, help us to trust your love, to serve your purpose, and to praise your holy Name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen



Part 2 - Children of God

Passage: Romans 8:14-17; John 15:9-17 & Col 1:22

These passages say remarkable things about our circumstances in relation to “I AM WHO I AM”. The one who is “God...of all that is and all that is happening” considers us his children. Co heirs with his son, Jesus.

Many years ago now, I was driving, and crashed into a wall. It was entirely my fault. My first thought after crashing, was “How can I ring my Dad and tell him?” I was scared of his response. But what actually happened? He was nothing but compassionate on the phone. When he arrived at the scene of the accident the first thing he did was hug me. Fathers love their children. In a time of difficulty God treats you as his beloved child.

The relationship God has given us is with himself. He has adopted us. Paul is speaking here of a Roman custom, where children were frequently adopted. They then had all the privileges of the family they were in. Paul talks in Colossians about us being “transferred from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of his dear son”. We now have all the privileges of that.

As a result – when God looks at us he sees us as “holy, without blemish and free from accusation”.

You may feel otherwise. You may feel stressed. You may be worried. You may feel you are unprepared. But God calls you his child. And when he looks at you, he does not look at you with accusation.

Reflection

Did you know singing aloud can have very positive mental health benefits? Pull out a hymnbook and sing a favourite hymn. Or go to youtube and find a beloved favourite. And then sing along aloud! Perhaps you could ring a friend and sing together? Suggested songs: “And can it be that I should gain?” by Charles Wesley, “Made Alive” by Citizens.

Prayer

Jesus, thank you that we are alive in you. That because of you God sees us as holy, without blemish and free from accusation. Help us understand what this really means. Amen

Tim Collison, on behalf of The Leprosy Mission Australia Team.



Part 3 - Where is God?

Passage: 2 Corinthians 1:3-11, Psalm 88

From AD 165 to AD 180 two waves of a plague swept across the Roman Empire. In some areas nearly a third of the population were killed. Roman deities were understood to be capricious, and difficult to please. But during this time people still turned to them. But Christianity also grew during this time period. “Christians cared for the sick and offered a spiritual model whereby plagues were not the work of an angry and capricious deities but the product of a broken Creation in revolt against a loving God” (Yeomans, *Biblical Archaeology Review*, 2017 & Stone, *Foreign Policy*, 2020).

This story, and the passage offer some helpful thoughts on where God is when suffering takes place. And how his people respond. The apostle Paul knew what it was to suffer. He was beaten, shipwrecked, stoned and rejected. But in this passage he is clear God is the one who delivered him. And he encourages them to find comfort in that. And to learn patient endurance in the suffering. What we see from Scripture is that suffering is real and will happen, but God is also present. And as Christians, like Paul, we can be comforted in that.

This doesn't mean we need to walk around in some false sense of bliss. Psalm 88 shows us how vulnerable we can be with God when we are fearful and worried. There are two useful points we can take, especially from verse 3. Paul still praises God – regardless of the suffering he has endured. And he reminds us that as we are comforted, so we can comfort other people.

Reflection

Here are some verses to pray through when you are worried or in a crisis:

1. John 9:3: That God's glory would be displayed through this crisis
2. 2 Cor 1:8-9: To depend more on God
3. 2 Cor 4:10-11: To make the life of Jesus more evident to the world
4. 2 Cor 12:9: To experience Christ is enough

Nancy Guthrie has some really wise words on turning suffering into ministry. She says “Rather than wanting the church to be to you what you need, be what you need to the church. The people who have the deepest hurts in your church are often the ones who are best equipped to deal with it.” If you are fearful and worried about what is taking place who could you comfort? What resource has been helpful to you?

Prayer

Father, who sustains us when all feels lost. Comfort us by your presence, and help us to also comfort those around us. Let us be a light, hope and grace to those around us. Amen

Tim Collison, on behalf of The Leprosy Mission Australia Team.



Part 4 - Our Duty

Passage: Matthew 25:31-40 & Romans 15:1 & 2

So far we have seen we are children of “I AM WHO I AM”, who is the God of comfort, who will strengthen us. What then is our duty as children of the king?

There is a long history of followers of Jesus caring for those who are sick during times of plague. In 1527 plague struck the theologian Martin Luther’s town of Wittenberg. Luther stayed to care for those who were sick, and produced a short pamphlet on a Christian’s duty in time of sickness. It is a little old fashioned but has three solid points.

1. Practice good hygiene and medicine. He writes “Use medicine...avoid places where [your] presence is not needed in order not to become contaminated and thus perchance infect...others, and so cause their death as a result of my negligence.” By obeying our government’s current rules in this situation – You are loving like Jesus! Wow! Wash your hands. Socially distance yourself. If exposed don’t infect others.
2. Satan will seek to use what is happening to cause fear and panic. “He is such a bitter, knavish devil that he...also takes delight in making us deathly afraid, worried and apprehensive.” Of course it is not wrong to feel those things. Luther suggest one very practical way of dealing with this fear:
3. “Get away you devil, with your terrors! Just because you hate it, I’ll spite you by going the more quickly to help my sick neighbour...I know helping my neighbour is a deed well pleasing to God...If you can terrorize, Christ can strengthen me. If you can kill, Christ can give life.” Luther also writes about if we are not willing to help “the least of these” we are not willing to help Jesus. He caveats this by reminding us of Romans 1 – that if you do not feel you can help, you are not sinning. Do what Christ gives you strength to do – And helping someone else will strengthen and bring comfort to you.

Reflect

If you are interested you can read the whole pamphlet here:

<https://tryingsmall.files.wordpress.com/2014/08/luther-on-plague.pdf>

Did you know spending 10 -15 minutes thinking about someone else, and how you can bless them can help relieve your own fears? What is a practical thing you could do to care for your neighbour (both geographically and metaphorically)? Listening to the advice our government is giving us. There are things you can do even if you can’t visit them: Pray for them, ring them, write them an encouraging card. All those can be done without needing to come in contact. If you can, you can offer to help with grocery shopping – or maybe even share the a roll of toilet paper!

Prayer (Borrowed from Luther)

May Christ our Lord preserve us all in pure faith and fervent love, unspotted and pure until his day. Amen

Tim Collison, on behalf of The Leprosy Mission Australia Team.



Part 5 - Peace

Passage: John 14:23-27

So. You've been spending time with Jesus. You've read the passages. Maybe even done some of the reflective activities. But you still don't feel at peace. And the peace of Jesus? That seems far away to you. It is okay to feel this way. But I'd like to suggest this does not mean you are being unfaithful, or that Jesus is not with you.

Sometimes when on a plane I will notice a nervous flier. Nervous fliers don't feel safe flying. They are often uncomfortable during the flight. But they still got on the plane. They still arrived at their destination.

If you don't feel completely peaceful, you may feel like you are not trusting in Jesus. Let me encourage you. If you are spending time in fellowship with God. If you are praying. If you are reading God's word. If you are loving your neighbour in whatever way you can. You are being faithful.

Like the nervous flier, you are trusting in God, by getting on the plane. It might not always feel safe. It might not be comfortable all the way. But you are on the plane. You are trusting God. And that is how we work towards being in the peace of God— even if our feelings may not match up to it.

We practice the 'holy actions' of fellowship (where possible) with other believers. We fellowship with God. We pray. We read. Those holy actions are the 'getting on a plane'. And as we practice those actions, we are being faithful. Even if it does not feel that way.

Reflect

Read Psalm 91. Read it again. Choose a particular verse which stands out to you. Write it down. Memorise it.

Prayer

Father, thank you for sending your Holy Spirit to point me to Jesus. Where I am weak can you please be strong? Where I am fearful can you bring peace? Amen

Tim Collison, on behalf of The Leprosy Mission Australia Team.



Psalm 29

A psalm of David.

- ¹ Ascribe to the LORD, you heavenly beings,
ascribe to the LORD glory and strength.
- ² Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name;
worship the LORD in the splendor of his holiness.
- ³ The voice of the LORD is over the waters;
the God of glory thunders,
the LORD thunders over the mighty waters.
- ⁴ The voice of the LORD is powerful;
the voice of the LORD is majestic.
- ⁵ The voice of the LORD breaks the cedars;
the LORD breaks in pieces the cedars of Lebanon.
- ⁶ He makes Lebanon leap like a calf,
Sirion like a young wild ox.
- ⁷ The voice of the LORD strikes
with flashes of lightning.
- ⁸ The voice of the LORD shakes the desert;
the LORD shakes the Desert of Kadesh.
- ⁹ The voice of the LORD twists the oaks
and strips the forests bare.
And in his temple all cry, "Glory!"
- ¹⁰ The LORD sits enthroned over the flood;
the LORD is enthroned as King forever.
- ¹¹ The LORD gives strength to his people;
the LORD blesses his people with peace.



Psalm 30

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

- ¹ I will exalt you, LORD,
for you lifted me out of the depths
and did not let my enemies gloat over me.
- ² LORD my God, I called to you for help,
and you healed me.
- ³ You, LORD, brought me up from the realm of the dead;
you spared me from going down to the pit.
- ⁴ Sing the praises of the LORD, you his faithful people;
praise his holy name.
- ⁵ For his anger lasts only a moment,
but his favor lasts a lifetime;
weeping may stay for the night,
but rejoicing comes in the morning.
- ⁶ When I felt secure, I said,
“I will never be shaken.”
- ⁷ LORD, when you favored me,
you made my royal mountain stand firm;
but when you hid your face,
I was dismayed.
- ⁸ To you, LORD, I called;
to the Lord I cried for mercy:
- ⁹ “What is gained if I am silenced,
if I go down to the pit?
Will the dust praise you?
Will it proclaim your faithfulness?”
- ¹⁰ Hear, LORD, and be merciful to me;
LORD, be my help.”
- ¹¹ You turned my wailing into dancing;
you removed my sackcloth and clothed me with joy,
- ¹² that my heart may sing your praises and not be silent.
LORD my God, I will praise you forever.



The power of prayer

Following the credo of its founder Wellesley Bailey, within The Leprosy Mission, prayer for the patients and for all the work of the Mission has always been experienced as an absolute necessity.

The word of the Lord Jesus: *"Ask, and it shall be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and it shall be opened unto you," (Luke 11: 9)* is for us a matter of the highest importance that we practice every day.

Why?

When we pray, we open our hearts to God. He sees what we worry about, whether aloud or silently.

He also sees how sincere our prayer is.

Every hour of every day millions of hearts are lifted to Him, and He hears it all. So we enter into a very large community of people praying all over the world.

Sometimes the urgencies are so big that our hands are not only folded, but it is as if they are banging on the doors of heaven; as in the Gospel parable of the widow who kept knocking on the door of the judge (Luke 18: 1-8).

It also shows that God is also like this, that He Himself cries when there is injustice.

And then it is at our doors that He is knocking, and not with a gentle knock, but with a loud bang or an accident or something that scares us that makes us say "if only I had ...".

There is a veritable flow, sometimes even a flood of movements flowing between heaven and earth, all worries from us to God and also from God to us.

All from our open heart, alone and together, to the big open heart of God.

Sometimes you would think God does not pay attention, someone is dying anyway, and wars go on.

That's why it's so important to hold onto the Word of the Lord. That is indisputable, because no matter how much misfortune and failure our lives and our hearts must undergo, we remain forever in God's inexhaustible love, particularly when we need to part this life, God's love embraces our soul and brings it to rest.

Our mission is that we continue to fight the "good fight of faith" precisely for all these leprosy patients and all those who lovingly care for them, as Jesus did.

Peter E. Janssen (5th August 1936 The Hague-NL – 20th October 2016 Arendonk-BE) was a retired pastor of the United Protestant Church in Belgium. He studied theology in Toronto, Brussels, Erlangen and Wuppertal, with a doctoral degree and was a member of the Council for Jews and Christians in Belgium and of different Commissions for Jewish-Christian relations. He was very active as a volunteer and vice-president of TLM Belgium. He was married to Marijke Sajet, who is also still very active as a volunteer and current vice-president of TLM Belgium.



Be “light” in my work

in French on next page, en français page suivante, tournez SVP

‘You were once dark, but now you are light in the Lord.’ Ephesians 5: 7, 8

‘Whatever you do, do everything for the glory of God.’ 1 Corinthians 10: 31

Be “light” in my work. Our Lord says to us: *“You are the light of the world ... May your light shine before men” (Matthew 5: 14,16)*. So how do I shine in my work? Our light can be darkened in our work. Too often we live a day without the Lord. The desire to be integrated at all costs, the desire to have a promotion, to want to please men rather than God under the pressure of exhausting work, can make us lose sight of our Christian mission. If our work becomes the priority of our life, it is as if our light is put “under a bowl” (container used to measure cereals, symbol of trade, business) (v. 15).

We can see in the Bible that work is a means given by God to support oneself and not be idle... but also a means to reflect the true light, to be an ambassador of Christ! The apostle Paul was a great servant of God while having a profession (tent maker). The “true light of the world” is our Lord Jesus! (John 8:12; 9:5). It was this light which attracted, which did not stone the woman taken in adultery, but speaks gently to the heart (see 8. 1-11). Let it live in us so that this light may manifest in our life. How do we do this? Let us reflect on it with prayer, considering what Paul tells us: *“The fruit of the light consists in all goodness, justice, and truth” (Ephesians 5: 9)*.

a– Be light by my seriousness, my honesty, always having, in particular, a true word, without lies, without underlying implication.

b - Be light by showing a genuine interest in my colleagues, compassion for those who suffer, being attentive to others, being positive ... having an attitude different to what we usually see in the world.

c- In a difficult and stressful work context, I can be involved in my professional work, while remaining peaceful. I can reflect this peace to my colleagues because I trust that God is at the helm of my life. To me the serious work, to God the results.

To be light is to guide those around me to the true light, through my actions and my words.

Reverend Elie FOFOLO - Born on August 5, 1964, son of a Baptist Pastor, both parents died. I am a pastor of vocation and formation, in 2001 I had my degree in Theology at the Protestant University in Congo (U.P.C). After working as a Pastor in the local Church of Kingabwa 1 from 2004 to 2011, I had a meeting with Angelika Piefer who headed the Coordination of the Mission against Leprosy in the Democratic Republic of Congo, from where I had this passion for people affected by Leprosy and I invited Angelika to come to World Leprosy Day in our church on Sunday 29/01/2012, in Kingabwa. This work led us to discover two girls from the same family with signs of leprosy, and their brother ended up being infected, but all three were treated and in good health. This sparked this passion to work as a volunteer in raising awareness, mobilization and the relationship with the local churches of the platform "Church of Christ in Congo" (E.C.C in acronym). - In July 2019, I obtained the Master in Psychotrauma, at the University

of Kinshasa, at the Faculty of Medicine. Training that allows me to better listen to and accompany people who suffer trauma and stress for biopsychosocial care. - I am married to only one woman, Madame Espérance since 16/10/1988. From this union God gave us five children including two girls and three boys. Just like Abraham and Sarah, my wife and I, are willing to give up everything and go where the need for the Mission is felt. - Elie Fofolo is currently pastor at the local church of Masina 3, the 15th Congo Baptist Community in Kinshasa

Être “lumière” dans mon travail

Vous étiez autrefois ténèbres, mais maintenant vous êtes lumière dans le Seigneur. Éphésiens 5. 7, 8

Quoi que vous fassiez, faites tout pour la gloire de Dieu. 1 Corinthiens 10. 31

Être “lumière” dans mon travail

Notre Seigneur nous dit: *“Vous êtes la lumière du monde... Que votre lumière brille devant les hommes” (Matthieu 5. 14, 16)*. Alors, comment la faire briller dans mon travail?

Notre lumière peut être assombrie dans notre travail. Il nous arrive trop souvent de vivre une journée sans le Seigneur. L’envie d’être intégré à tout prix, le désir d’avoir une promotion, vouloir plaire aux hommes plutôt qu’à Dieu sous la pression d’un travail harassant, peuvent nous faire perdre de vue notre mission de chrétien. Si notre travail devient la priorité de notre vie, notre lumière est comme mise “sous le boisseau” (réceptier servant à mesurer les céréales, symbole du commerce, des affaires) (v. 15).

Nous pouvons voir dans la Bible que le travail est un moyen donné par Dieu pour ne pas être oisif, pour subvenir à ses besoins... mais aussi pour refléter la vraie lumière, pour être un ambassadeur de Christ! L’apôtre Paul a été un grand serviteur de Dieu tout en ayant une profession (fabricant de tentes).

La “vraie lumière du monde”, c’est notre Seigneur Jésus! (Jean 8. 12; 9. 5). Il était cette lumière qui attire, qui ne lapide pas, mais parle avec douceur au cœur (voir 8. 1-11). Laissons-le vivre en nous pour que sa lumière se manifeste dans notre vie. Comment le réaliser? Réfléchissons-y avec prière en considérant ce qu’il nous dit: *“Le fruit de la lumière consiste en toute bonté, justice, et vérité” (Éphésiens 5. 9)*.

a– Être lumière par mon sérieux, mon honnêteté, ayant toujours, en particulier, une parole vraie, sans mensonge, sans sous-entendu.

b– Être lumière en manifestant un véritable intérêt pour mes collègues, de la compassion pour ceux qui souffrent, en étant à l’écoute des autres, en étant positif... en ayant une attitude différente de celle que l’on voit habituellement dans le monde.

c– Dans un contexte de travail difficile et stressant, je peux être impliqué dans mon travail professionnel, tout en restant paisible. Je peux refléter cette paix auprès de mes collègues, car j’ai confiance que Dieu tient le gouvernail de ma vie. À moi le travail sérieux, à Dieu les résultats.

Être lumière, c’est guider ceux qui m’entourent vers la vraie lumière, par mes actes et par mes paroles.

Révérant Elie FOFOLO - Né le 05 Aout 1964, fils d’un Pasteur Baptiste les deux parents sont tous morts. Je suis pasteur de vocation et de formation, en 2001 j’ai eu ma licence en Théologie à l’Université Protestante au Congo (U.P.C). Après avoir travaillé comme Pasteur dans l’Eglise locale de Kingabwa 1 de 2004 à 2011, j’ai fait une rencontre avec Angelika Piefer qui dirigeait la Coordination de la Mission contre la Lèpre en République Démocratique du Congo, de là j’ai eu cette passion des personnes affectées par la Lèpre et j’ai invité Angelika de venir faire la Journée Mondiale Lèpre dans notre église le dimanche 29/01/2012, à Kingabwa. Ce travail nous a emmené à découvrir deux fillettes d’une même famille avec des signes de la lèpre et leur frère aussi a fini par être contaminé mais tous trois ont été soignés et sont en bonne santé. Cela suscita cette passion de travailler comme

volontaire dans la sensibilisation, la mobilisation et la relation avec les églises locales de la plateforme "Eglise du Christ au Congo" (E.C.C en sigle). - En juillet 2019, j'ai obtenu le Master en Psychotrauma, à l'Université de Kinshasa, à la faculté de Médecine. Une formation qui me permet de mieux écouter et d'accompagner les personnes qui souffrent des traumatismes et des stress pour une prise en charge biopsychosociale. - Je suis marié à une seule femme, madame Espérance depuis le 16/10/1988. De cette union Dieu nous a donné cinq enfants dont deux filles et trois garçons. - Tout comme Abraham et Sarah, ma femme et moi, sommes disposés de tout abandonner et aller où le besoin de la Mission se fait sentir. - Elie Fofolo est actuellement Pasteur à l'Eglise locale de Masina 3, de la 15^{ème} Communauté Baptiste du Congo à Kinshasa



Hard truth in love – reflections on Micah chapter 1

Most of us will do everything possible to avoid difficult news! Many, many years ago God had difficult news for His people - so He sent Micah! Micah chapter 1 is tough to read. The truth is hard for us to hear, but God cares enough to give it us anyway.

God tells Israel and Judah that their behaviour is not good and must stop. God has to show us that something is wrong, that what we are doing is wrong, is foolish, is dangerous.

We suppress the truth - we use passages like Exodus 34:6 *And he passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, "The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin."* but forget very next verse! *"Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children and their children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation."*

It is easy to use grace and mercy as an excuse to ignore the parts of Bible that speak of sin and holiness. Sometimes we don't want to hear what God has to say. But if we don't listen HE can't help us. It is pointless focussing on the blessings of God but ignore HIS warnings

Consider today:

- How do you handle difficult news in the Bible?
- What parts of Bible do you actively avoid?
- What is God's Word telling you that you are choosing to ignore?

It is more loving for God to show us what is wrong than to ignore the 'cancer' of sin in our lives. It is more loving for us to wrestle with hard parts of scripture with friends and neighbours than not let them know God loves them

God's hard truths do not contradict HIS love. Following the hard truths we read in Micah chapter 1, there is the wonderful promise of deliverance in *Micah 2:12 "I will surely gather all of you, Jacob; I will surely bring together the remnant of Israel. I will bring them together like sheep in a pen, like a flock in its pasture; the place will throng with people."*

The Bible will reveal our failures, our sin when we read it - but will also reveal this loving God who died for us. When Jesus exposes our failure and sin He wants to show us that He has already paid the price for them on the Cross. Because of Jesus we don't need to ignore hard truths –

the Cross of Christ shows us that He has our best interests at heart.



'treasure glittering in the earth'

"The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field." Matthew 13:44

I am privileged to live on a hillside in a beautiful area of south west England. Looking down from my study window across the valley to distant hills I can see the interplay of cloud and sun, -parts of the landscape revealed or concealed with light and shade, mist and rain (quite a lot of that recently!).

Last week, with a deep grey sky advancing from the west, the morning sun shining from the east and a screen of rain in the distance, I saw an area of wooded hill illuminated and standing out as I had never seen it before. It had always been there, of course, but it usually blended with other features around it.

Sometimes it takes a backdrop of dark, threatening things to highlight the precious things we might have been missing, or taking for granted. Whether it is because of a health threat, or the rumblings of animosity between powerful nations, or a heavy sense of grim situations across the world, our own joys and the things we normally take for granted may seem to shine more brightly, our awareness of them becomes clearer.

How much more dear to our hearts our loved ones become in dark times; how much more important those basic relationships are seen to be. At such times it becomes more pressing to settle that quarrel, to restore that broken friendship, to hold one another more closely, or to work out what we believe, in a shaky world, -not just for now but for eternity.

We believe that God loved his world so much that he sent his one and only Son, so that as we respond to him we find, more and more clearly, that those threatening clouds, real though they be, are not the end of the story. The priceless treasure glitters more beautifully in the dark earth around it. There is hope, a way forward transcending the uncertainties and conditions and fears of our times.

So, dark clouds and grim circumstances can play their part; turning my thoughts to what really matters, to those I am committed to in love, and to my Father God whose love and saving grace shall outlast the years. The threats make me see more clearly the vital things, the best of human joys and of divine graces; -truths and privileges that otherwise might fade into my familiar earthly landscapes.

With my good wishes and prayers,

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 TLMI by leading retreat days and other such things as opportunity allows. He now pastors a Church in South-West England part time, and continues as a volunteer speaker for TLM.



"What would make our life better?"

Mail from Dr. Piet Both 23-03-2020:

*"For we don't live for ourselves or die for ourselves.
If we live, it's to honor the Lord.
And if we die, it's to honor the Lord.
So, whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord. Romans 14,7-9*

I just wanted to share this with you.

Grateful for having met with you and with many other people in and through TLM, who through their testimony, their words and prayers and daily life have encouraged me to believe this.

I'll never forget how a very old lady in Dikungu Tshumbe led us in a prayer, she sang Psalm 23. She was blind. The whole day she had participated in group sessions about "what would make our life better". She had not spoken, but when we invited people to pray she took the lead: "The Lord is my shepherd!"

Piet Both Dr - TLM staff, from 1991 till 2015. I started as Medical Advisor for TLM Africa and have been based in The Netherlands. It has been a privilege to work with so many TLM colleagues especially in African countries, Bangladesh and Nepal.



Psalm 31

For the director of music. A psalm of David.

¹In you, LORD, I have taken refuge;
let me never be put to shame;
deliver me in your righteousness.

²Turn your ear to me,
come quickly to my rescue;
be my rock of refuge,
a strong fortress to save me.

³Since you are my rock and my fortress,
for the sake of your name lead and guide me.

⁴Keep me free from the trap that is set for me,
for you are my refuge.

⁵Into your hands I commit my spirit;
deliver me, LORD, my faithful God.

⁶I hate those who cling to worthless idols;
as for me, I trust in the LORD.

⁷I will be glad and rejoice in your love,
for you saw my affliction
and knew the anguish of my soul.

⁸You have not given me into the hands of the enemy
but have set my feet in a spacious place.

⁹Be merciful to me, LORD, for I am in distress;
my eyes grow weak with sorrow,
my soul and body with grief.

¹⁰My life is consumed by anguish
and my years by groaning;
my strength fails because of my affliction,
and my bones grow weak.

¹¹Because of all my enemies,
I am the utter contempt of my neighbors
and an object of dread to my closest friends—
those who see me on the street flee from me.

¹²I am forgotten as though I were dead;
I have become like broken pottery.

¹³ For I hear many whispering,
 “Terror on every side!”
They conspire against me
 and plot to take my life.
¹⁴ But I trust in you, LORD;
 I say, “You are my God.”
¹⁵ My times are in your hands;
deliver me from the hands of my enemies,
 from those who pursue me.
¹⁶ Let your face shine on your servant;
 save me in your unfailing love.
¹⁷ Let me not be put to shame, LORD,
 for I have cried out to you;
but let the wicked be put to shame
and be silent in the realm of the dead.
¹⁸ Let their lying lips be silenced,
 for with pride and contempt
they speak arrogantly against the righteous.
¹⁹ How abundant are the good things
that you have stored up for those who fear you,
 that you bestow in the sight of all,
 on those who take refuge in you.
²⁰ In the shelter of your presence you hide them
 from all human intrigues;
you keep them safe in your dwelling
 from accusing tongues.
²¹ Praise be to the LORD,
for he showed me the wonders of his love
 when I was in a city under siege.
²² In my alarm I said,
 “I am cut off from your sight!”
Yet you heard my cry for mercy
 when I called to you for help.
²³ Love the LORD, all his faithful people!
The LORD preserves those who are true to him,
 but the proud he pays back in full.
²⁴ Be strong and take heart,
 all you who hope in the LORD.



Psalm 32

Of David. A maskil.

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

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

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

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

⁵Then I acknowledged my sin to you
and did not cover up my iniquity.

I said, "I will confess
my transgressions to the LORD."

And you forgave
the guilt of my sin.

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

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

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

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

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

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



Do not be afraid, for I am with you!

So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand. Isaiah 41:10 For I am the LORD your God who takes hold of your right hand and says to you, Do not fear; I will help you Isaiah 41:13

But now, this is what the LORD says— he who created you, Jacob, he who formed you, Israel: “Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine. Is. 43:1

Do not be afraid, for I am with you Isaiah 43:5

This is what the LORD says— he who made you, who formed you in the womb, and who will help you: Do not be afraid, Jacob, my servant, Isaiah 44:2

Do not tremble, do not be afraid. Isaiah 44:8

Someone has counted 366 times in the Bible when God says: “Don’t be afraid”. I cannot confirm that statement as a fact but I find it interesting. If it’s true, God gives us a promise for each day of the year, which even covers the intercalary day!

There are four special occasions in the Bible when God tells us not to fear:

1. God’s people in front of the Red Sea *“Moses answered the people, “Do not be afraid. Stand firm and you will see the deliverance the LORD will bring you today. The Egyptians you see today you will never see again. The LORD will fight for you; you need only to be still.” Exodus 14:13-14*

The people was threatened by their former slavery masters and they were so afraid! They couldn’t see the way forward, it was under the water. But God encouraged them and he opened the hidden way for the complete deliverance.

2. The disciples of Jesus in the storm *“But Jesus immediately said to them: “Take courage! It is I. Don’t be afraid.” Matt 14:23*

The trained fishermen were so afraid of the sudden storm on the lake. But Jesus came to them on the water, encouraged them and changed the situation.

3. Maria received the calling from God *“Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. But the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. “ Luke 1:30*

When the angel explained to Mary the calling from God over her life, she was so filled with questions and fear. How could it be possible for her to be mother? What will be the consequences for her and Joseph? Of course, she was afraid but she accepted the task from God and said “Yes” to God’s calling.

4. Jesus the last night with his disciples *“Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me” John 14:1*

The disciples couldn't really understand what Jesus tried to explain to them and they were so afraid in an uncertain situation but Jesus encouraged them to believe in and trust God!

Dear friends, in these special times:

Do not be afraid! God is still in control and still on his throne! He will take care of us and his work!

Allan Ekstedt, country leader TLM Sweden



Beyond the storm

Autumn in the Cape is supposed to be the time of year when the wind abates. However, it seems that the Cape Doctor, as the fierce South-Easterly wind is known, did not get the memo this year.

When I set off for my walk up the hill, I was assaulted by plumes of white sand driven from the beach across the railway tracks and onto the road. My teeth and eyes were full of grit. I was some distance from the shore, but occasionally, sea-spray would splatter my shirt. The cars were dodging the sand-drifts in the road. The trains stopped because the pints were clogged with sand. Large boughs broke from the blue-gum trees that grace the entrance to Simon's Town and in the harbour, ships were being moved out to sea to prevent them being dashed against the wharf.

Each time I lifted one of my feet, the wind would twist me slightly and I pirouetted like a drunken ballerina. Yes, admittedly not the prettiest image to contemplate during your morning devotions.

As I reached the base of the stone steps, people ahead of me were being knocked off their feet. The pylons, which used to support the cable way to the Royal Naval hospital at the top of the hill, clanged menacingly in the gale. [The hospital was built at the top of the hill to discourage His Majesty's seafarers from seeking out the charms of Simon's Town's taverns during their convalescence – which seems a bit like wishful thinking on the part of the Admiralty, as these men dealt daily with vastly more formidable challenges in the Southern Ocean].

I battled my way up the first set of steps, wondering if I was being more foolish than normal, when the strangest thing happened.

The wind disappeared.

When I reached the top, 200 metres above the harbour, even the tallest fronds of grass hung motionless. I panted in the stillness. At the base of the hill, the wind had kept me cool, but up here, my head pounded with the heat. Below me, the wind screeched through the masts of the yachts in the marina. How could it be so deathly still at the top of the hill, with nothing to block the gale? I'm told that it is a trick of the high-pressure system, that forms an invisible cap around the mountains, forcing the wind below it.

In 1 Kings 19:11 – 12, we read that “a great and powerful wind tore the mountains apart and shattered the rocks before the LORD, but the LORD was not in the wind ... And after the fire came a gentle whisper.”

It is eerie, standing at the top of the hill, where the gentlest whispers are audible, knowing that further down, you must below to make yourself heard above the relentless noise of the wind.

And in this stillness, this profound quietness, the Lord addresses a question to me and to you:

“What are you doing here, Elijah?”

We know Elijah's answer. We also know that the Lord told him to go and anoint two kings plus his successor.

We can be forgiven when our attention is arrested by storms, earthquakes and fires, but the Lord has a great task for you – and you alone – and to learn from Him what that task entails, you need to look beyond these distractions and go out and hear Him.

Resolve this day not to allow the clatter of the gale to veil His whisper from you. For in that whisper you will discover glories greater than the tumult of all the oceans, visions more splendid than those afforded by the highest mountains and a purpose in life outshining every other calling.

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.



God who knows our need even before we ask.

Mark 8: 1-10

From the passage, we can learn the following.

1. God honours when we spend time with Him alone, however short or long period.
People have been with Jesus for three long days, He could not send them away hungry; He was worried they would faint on their way back home.
2. God understands our exact situation we are in. Where do we belong, how far have we come and our physical, emotional, spiritual needs.
3. God uses the resources what is available with us.
God used the seven loaves of bread and a few small fishes to satisfy the hunger of 4000 men and their families.
4. God gives us more than what we need or what we ask.
There were seven baskets full remaining after feeding the multitude.

*Are we willing to sacrifice our time to be with Him alone?
Are we willing to use what we have with us for His work?*

Dr. Helen Roberts, medical superintendent - TLM Hospital Vadathorasalur. India.



You are not a person affected by leprosy

You are not a person affected by leprosy

You are my beloved daughter
You are my beloved son
Yes - YOU!

You are a unique expression of Me (God)
I have created you - beautiful & perfect
I have created you whole - complete with My Spirit inside you

You are worthy.
You are precious.
You are worthy of your best life.
You are worthy of all I have to give you.
I want to give you so much more.
Accept your worthiness.
Accept Me - all of Me.
I AM everything you need.
I AM, and you are too - you are part of Me.
We are not separate.
I will never leave you - nor forsake you.
I AM always with you.

You ARE my beloved.
Come, Beloved, accept your true identity.
You are mine, you are my heir, heir to all I have - it is yours.
Take, eat, drink, accept.
You are invaluable, irreplaceable and beyond price.
You are My crown jewel, set high in My glory.
There to shine and bring honour to My Name.
Your true nature is to simply shine. Just shine.
I AM already pleased with you.
Oh how you shine so brightly! And bring me JOY!
Keep shining Beloved.
You are Brilliant!
YES! YOU!

Authors in Alphabetical Order

Textuarium

Allan Ekstedt	27 April		Exodus 3,1-14	13 April
Anne-Claude Jonah	7 -8 April		1 Kings 19,11-12	28 April
Belinda Pettman	30 April		Psalms 29	18 April
Dan Izzett	4-5 April		Psalms 30	19 April
David Beazley	23 April		Psalms 31	25 April
David, king of Israel	18, 19, 25, 26 April		Psalms 32	26 April
Dorothy Owen	12 April		Isaiah 41,10-13	27 April
Hannie Stehouwer MD	1 April		Micah 1	22 April
Helen Roberts MD	29 April		Matthew 3,13-17	7 and 8 April
J. S. Bach	11 April		Matthew 13,44	23 April
Jannine Ebenso	22 April		Matthew 25,31-40	16 April
Julian Urban MD	3 April		Mark 8,1-10	29 April
Moses Onoh MD	6 April		Luke 11,9	20 April
Pete Garratt	2 April		Luke 23	9 and 10 April
Peter Laubscher	28 April		Luke 24, 5-6	12 April
Piet Both MD	24 April		John 4,7-15	6 April
Raju PLN Dr	9 – 10 April		John 10,10	2 April
Rev Élie Fofolo	21 April		John 14,23-27	17 April
Rev Peter Janssen	20 April		Acts 2,4-47	4, 5 April
Tim Collison	13 – 17 April		Romans 8, 14-17	14 April
			Romans 14,7-9	24 April
			2 Cor 1,3-11	15 April
			Ephesians 5,7-8	21 April
			1 Thess 5,18	1 April

The Bridge - TLM Daily Devotions

Editor: Marta Risko - Theological lector: Allan Ekstedt - Grammar proof: Christine Osman