



TLM Daily Devotions

September 2020





Crix and crax

Intro to the month of September

One of the favourite phases in the monthly process of my voluntary ministry of editing The Bridge is to format and paste the respective devotionals to their place, and adding the signatures to them. Most of the authors I have been knowing for many years, even decades, so pasting their name is a moment and opportunity to silently wish blessing upon them, too, same as on those whom I have not had a chance to meet yet in person.

This slightly mechanical activity means a kind of “virtual world expedition” for me. I am often amazed on the Monday devotional e.g. coming from India, the Tuesday one from Cape Town, the Wednesday one from Papua-New-Guinea, the Thursday one from Sweden, and the Friday one perhaps from Australia... Crix-crax across the Globe within a few hours, copy – paste – Asia – Africa – North – South – quicker than any supersonic device... while I am stably sitting at my desk...

But my utmost amazement is each time about not just the relative smallness of our Planet, but about the greatness of our Lord. Across these crix-craxes we somewhere are so similar ones, so near and close, as our lives are in the palm of the hand of our loving and caring Father. We all without exception are seeking His face and trying to serve Him. No matter our colour, traditions, languages, GDP-levels: we are One.

May this set of September strengthen again our oneness, unity and love in Him!

Marta



The table with five feet

Projects fail for lack of counsel; But they are successful when there are many advisers. Proverbs 15:22

Do you dream of going for it but don't know if now is the right time?
Do you keep wondering what you may have forgotten in your action plan?
Are you really ready?

Imagine a table with five legs (but without closing your eyes, otherwise you will not be able to read the rest). If one leg isn't strong enough, the whole table is wobbly. If a foot is missing, it becomes very unstable. It is the same in life: there are five pillars that ensure its stability. Here they are :

- 1- Energy: is your physical shape good? Do you have enough energy?
- 2- Money: are your finances okay?
- 3- Relationships: do you have a network? Are you doing well with your family, your friends?
- 4- Motivation: do you feel in your place? Is your motivation optimal?
- 5- Time: do you have time in front of you? Do you have enough time in your daily life?

Analyze the five pillars in your life: if they are stable enough, then you are ready to go.
If a pillar is a little wobbly, take the time to consolidate it. This will prevent you from falling apart over a lack of stability.

Commit your works to the Lord, and your plans will be successful. Proverbs 16: 3

La table a cinq pieds.

Les projets échouent, faute d'une assemblée qui délibère; Mais ils réussissent quand il y a de nombreux conseillers. Proverbes 15:22

Tu rêves de te lancer mais tu ne sais pas si c'est le bon moment ?
Tu te demandes sans cesse ce que tu as pu oublier dans ton plan d'action ?
Est-ce que tu es vraiment prêt ?

Imagine une table à cinq pieds (mais sans fermer les yeux, sinon tu ne pourras pas lire la suite). Si un pied n'est pas assez solide, toute la table est bancal. S'il manque un pied, elle devient très instable. C'est pareil dans la vie : il y a cinq piliers qui assurent sa stabilité. Les voici :

1- L'énergie : est-ce que ta forme physique est bonne ? Est-ce que tu as assez d'énergie ?

2- L'argent : est-ce que tes finances vont bien ?

3- Les relations : est-ce que tu as un réseau ? Est-ce que tu vas bien relationnellement avec ta famille, tes amis ?

4- La motivation : est-ce que tu te sens à ta place ? Est-ce que ta motivation est optimale ?

5- Le temps : est-ce que tu as du temps devant toi ? Est-ce que tu as suffisamment de temps dans ton quotidien ?

Analyse les cinq piliers dans ta vie : s'ils sont assez stables, alors tu es prêt à te lancer.

Si un pilier est un peu bancal, prends le temps de le consolider. Ça t'évitera que tout s'effondre à cause d'un manque de stabilité.

Recommande à l'Éternel tes oeuvres, Et tes projets réussiront. Proverbes 16:3

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



The Prophet Nehemiah

1. An Unusual Prophet

Normally somebody is considered a prophet due to their:

- Miracles
- Prophecy (telling the future etc)
- Teaching / Preaching

Nehemiah who lived around 2450 years ago in Babylon (present day Iraq) was a person who had a very different background, he was:

- Cupbearer to Emperor of Persia (important Diplomat)
- Governor of Judea
- Rebuilt the Holy City of Jerusalem and its temple for worship of God

2. He lived in a time of crisis

In chapter 1:3 it reads 'the remnant that are left of the captivity there in the province are in great affliction and reproach: the wall of Jerusalem is also broken down and the gates are burned with fire' (KJV version). Sound familiar? The times may be different, but the world today is also faced with great affliction – that of coronavirus and just like Jerusalem that once great commercial centre in the Middle East was in ruins, so our economic system at this time is also in ruins.

3. Nehemiah was practical

So, what was Nehemiah's response? Unlike other prophets he did not proclaim doom and God's judgement, neither did he confine his activities to prayer and fasting and then just wait for things to change. Although we read, he was a prayerful man (for example crying out to God in chapter 4 verses 4-5), his response was very practical he got authorisation from the authorities, went to the field and he started to take action.

4. God used his administrative skills

When Nehemiah returned to Jerusalem (in present day Israel) from Babylon he found problems such as nepotism, corruption, mismanagement, lack of equity in terms of income, distrust, lack of unity, buildings in need of repair and poor organisational structure. So he needed to evaluate and make reforms/changes. The fact this story is in the Holy Bible shows that good, fair, honest and effective management & administration is not just a secular matter it is important to God. For to overcome that crisis a good action plan was required, just as today we need a well planned and strategic response to support the people affected by leprosy who are threatened by both the coronavirus disease as well as its economic impacts.

5. The Story of Nehemiah

The book of Nehemiah tells us a lot about good management practise:

- There was an identification of the problem, with an evaluation of physical structures i.e. the walls, the buildings, the facilities in Jerusalem (Chapter 2)
- Involved the community in a participatory way to rebuild to city walls (Chapter 3)

- There was opposition from outside enemies, so they had to be bold as well as take security precautions (Chapters 4 and 7)
- Nehemiah was the governor (like being in charge of a State/Region) but he did not misuse his power, he lived simply and worked alongside his people – even doing manual tasks like building walls! (Chapter 5)
- They had to ignore ‘fake news’: false rumours (stories) and gossip being spread about which could mislead or discourage them (Chapter 6)
- Nehemiah had to introduce a strong organisational structure which included good accounting procedures such as lists of animals and people in the city; as well as transparency with records of donors and all the income & gifts for the rebuilding work, such as gold, silver, ceremonial bowls and expensive clothes/robes. (Chapters 7 & 11)
- Worship/prayer/giving thanks to God alongside all the action was very important (Chapters 1 & 8)
- Guidelines, regulations, policies, duties, roles and agreements were instituted to ensure operations were conducted properly. (Chapters 9, 10, 11, 12 & 13)

6. TLM

Like in Nehemiah’s time we are in a time of crises, the people in Jerusalem had given up hope, they had become resigned to the situation, they felt they just had to live with it, they felt helpless and powerless. There is a temptation for us to feel the same, to go into hibernation in our self-isolation, but instead we need to unite, just as the exiles who returned to Jerusalem had to come together. We need to identify the needs, think strategically beyond the here and now and take action to bring hope, mobilise the communities we work with and obtain resources. As Nehemiah shows good project planning and well managed interventions are a spiritual as well as a secular matter, important not only for us, our projects and our clients but also to God.



A Blessing – The Lord Bless You and Keep You

On YouTube today you can find many versions of this blessing as churches all around the world have come together to sing, in many languages, this blessing over the people of many countries during these days when the pandemic casts its shadow over us all.

This is the beginning of the Aaronic Blessing which is found in *Numbers 6:24-26*.

God told Moses to instruct Aaron to bless the people of Israel with these words so that God's name would be placed on the Israelites and they would be blessed by God.

“The Lord bless you and keep you, The Lord make His face shine upon you and be gracious unto you, The Lord turn His face towards you and give you peace.”

A blessing is one way of asking for God's favour to rest on others. Here in Scotland, in the Church of Scotland we use these words to bless an infant after baptism, as a way of bestowing God's blessing on the life of the child; to bless a couple after a marriage ceremony; to bless at a time of ordination; etc. It is however, a really beautiful prayer of blessing for all different situations and is particularly apt in these days when people are feeling weighed down and hemmed in by this virus, when people are frightened to come out of their lockdown and meet other people, particularly strangers.

Pray that blessing today for those you love and care for, naming them individually. As you pray the words, think about their wider meaning. They are praying that God would:

‘Bless’ them with something of real and lasting value;

Keep them, watch over and protect them and provide for them;

Guide and guard them, through his divine favour;

Enlighten them, so that they would see His beauty and reflect a fraction of that back to Him;

Bring His light into the dark corners of their lives, so that they would see His care for them and share that with others;

Be kind to them, showing them His grace, His mercy and His compassion;

Be pleased with them and turn towards them, seeing them with loving acceptance and not disapproval;

Be for them and not against them, showing them His way forward from whatever their situation is;

Give them peace as only God can – a deep inner peace of tranquillity of heart and mind;

Give them joy, revealing Himself as the source of eternal life.

There is so much blessing in this prayer because of the source of that blessing – our loving Heavenly Father. Today as you pray that prayer for others, may you indeed know that it is prayed for you too, whatever your situation today. As you think more deeply about the words of the blessing may you know God has put His name on you and because He knows your name, He is speaking His words of peace directly into your soul.

*“The Lord bless you and keep you,
The Lord make His face shine upon you and be gracious unto you,
The Lord turn His face towards you and give you peace.”*



Getting to know Jesus better from the letter to the

Hebrews

In Christ we have:

- 1) A SUPERIOR NAME – (Heb.1:4) "Having become so much better than the angels, as He has by inheritance obtained a more excellent Name than they."
- 2) A GREATER HIGH PRIEST – (Heb.7:7) "Now beyond all contradiction the lesser is blessed by the better."
- 3) A BETTER HOPE – (Heb.7:19) "For the law made nothing perfect; on the other hand, there is the bringing in of a better hope, through which we draw near to God."
- 4) A BETTER COVENANT – (Heb.7:22) "By so much more Jesus has become a surety of a better Covenant."
- 5) A SUPERIOR MINISTRY – (Heb.8:6) "But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry.."
- 6) A SUPERIOR COVENANT – (Heb.8:6) "...inasmuch as He is also Mediator of a better Covenant..."
- 7) BETTER PROMISES – (Heb.8:6) "...which was established on better promises."
- 8) A BETTER SACRIFICE – (Heb.9:23) "...but the Heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these."
- 9) BETTER AND MORE LASTING POSSESSION – (Heb.10:34) "...knowing that you have a better and an enduring possession for yourselves in Heaven."
- 10) A BETTER COUNTRY – (Heb.11:16) "But now they desire a better, that is, a heavenly country....for He has prepared a City for them."
- 11) A BETTER RESURRECTION – (Heb.11:35) "...Others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they may obtain a better Resurrection."
- 12) A BETTER PLAN – (Heb.11:40) "God having provided something better for us, that they should not be made perfect apart from us."



Psalm 67

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

- ¹ May God be gracious to us and bless us
and make his face shine on us
² so that your ways may be known on earth,
your salvation among all nations.
³ May the peoples praise you, God;
may all the peoples praise you.
⁴ May the nations be glad and sing for joy,
for you rule the peoples with equity
and guide the nations of the earth.
⁵ May the peoples praise you, God;
may all the peoples praise you.
⁶ The land yields its harvest;
God, our God, blesses us.
⁷ May God bless us still,
so that all the ends of the earth will fear him.



Psalm 68

For the director of music. Of David. A psalm. A song.

- ¹ May God arise, may his enemies be scattered;
may his foes flee before him.
- ² May you blow them away like smoke—
as wax melts before the fire,
may the wicked perish before God.
- ³ But may the righteous be glad
and rejoice before God;
may they be happy and joyful.
- ⁴ Sing to God, sing in praise of his name,
extol him who rides on the clouds;
rejoice before him—his name is the LORD.
- ⁵ A father to the fatherless, a defender of widows,
is God in his holy dwelling.
- ⁶ God sets the lonely in families,
he leads out the prisoners with singing;
but the rebellious live in a sun-scorched land.
- ⁷ When you, God, went out before your people,
when you marched through the wilderness,
- ⁸ the earth shook, the heavens poured down rain,
before God, the One of Sinai,
before God, the God of Israel.
- ⁹ You gave abundant showers, O God;
you refreshed your weary inheritance.
- ¹⁰ Your people settled in it,
and from your bounty, God, you provided for the poor.
- ¹¹ The Lord announces the word,
and the women who proclaim it are a mighty throng:
- ¹² “Kings and armies flee in haste;
the women at home divide the plunder.
- ¹³ Even while you sleep among the sheep pens,
the wings of my dove are sheathed with silver,
its feathers with shining gold.”
- ¹⁴ When the Almighty scattered the kings in the land,
it was like snow fallen on Mount Zalmon.
- ¹⁵ Mount Bashan, majestic mountain,
Mount Bashan, rugged mountain,

¹⁶ why gaze in envy, you rugged mountain,
at the mountain where God chooses to reign,
where the LORD himself will dwell forever?
¹⁷ The chariots of God are tens of thousands
and thousands of thousands;
the Lord has come from Sinai into his sanctuary.
¹⁸ When you ascended on high,
you took many captives;
you received gifts from people,
even from the rebellious—
that you, LORD God, might dwell there.
¹⁹ Praise be to the Lord, to God our Savior,
who daily bears our burdens.
²⁰ Our God is a God who saves;
from the Sovereign LORD comes escape from death.
²¹ Surely God will crush the heads of his enemies,
the hairy crowns of those who go on in their sins.
²² The Lord says, "I will bring them from Bashan;
I will bring them from the depths of the sea,
²³ that your feet may wade in the blood of your foes,
while the tongues of your dogs have their share."
²⁴ Your procession, God, has come into view,
the procession of my God and King into the sanctuary.
²⁵ In front are the singers, after them the musicians;
with them are the young women playing the timbrels.
²⁶ Praise God in the great congregation;
praise the LORD in the assembly of Israel.
²⁷ There is the little tribe of Benjamin, leading them,
there the great throng of Judah's princes,
and there the princes of Zebulun and of Naphtali.
²⁸ Summon your power, God;
show us your strength, our God, as you have done before.
²⁹ Because of your temple at Jerusalem
kings will bring you gifts.
³⁰ Rebuke the beast among the reeds,
the herd of bulls among the calves of the nations.
Humbled, may the beast bring bars of silver.
Scatter the nations who delight in war.
³¹ Envoys will come from Egypt;
Cush will submit herself to God.
³² Sing to God, you kingdoms of the earth,
sing praise to the Lord,
³³ to him who rides across the highest heavens, the ancient heavens,
who thunders with mighty voice.
³⁴ Proclaim the power of God,
whose majesty is over Israel,
whose power is in the heavens.
³⁵ You, God, are awesome in your sanctuary;
the God of Israel gives power and strength to his people.
Praise be to God!



The Faith Multiplier

At one time 5000 people came to listen to Jesus preach the Gospel. It became lunch time. He took the five loaves of bread and two fish offered by a little boy, looked up to heaven, gave thanks and broke the bread. Then he gave it to his disciples to distribute to the people who came to listen to him, for their meal. He also divided the two fish among them all (Mark 6:41). The disciples had just then come back from their first fruitful gospel preaching mission that Jesus had sent them (Mark 6: 8-13). They had earlier performed many miracles in the name of Christ. Yet, their faith in the Almighty God must be deepened further.

The disciples had brought to Jesus a challenging situation which baffled them. How to feed the multitudes who came to listen to Jesus preaching the saving grace of God? He threw the challenge right back at them saying, "You give them something to eat" (Mark 6:37). This was to test what would be their solution to the problem. The disciples did not have two hundred *denarii* needed to provide a meal for the 5,000 people (Mark 6:37). They had no means to fulfil Jesus' instruction. Human ability fails beyond a point. Jesus did not leave them lost with their predicament. It was an opportune moment to demonstrate God's faithfulness. When a believer is committed and courageous to do God's will; no challenge in the world is insurmountable. Look unto the Provider for the provision (the solution).

Jesus thanked God for what He had already provided; 5 loaves of bread and 2 fishes. When he broke the bread and distributed the bread and the fish, more than 5,000 people were fed, and much was leftover. Jesus believed that when God had already given that much, he would also provide the rest to bring glory to Himself. Every resource belongs to God. Jesus had put his faith in God's provision. Bigger the challenge, greater shall be the blessing. Be thankful to God for the blessing one has already received. Use it to multiply for the good of people. Multiplication is a Godly principle. It's not the quantity but the willingness to contribute for a larger purpose that moved God's heart.

Jesus did this miracle not in private but in front of a large crowd. What will happen if he fails to multiply the bread and fish and feed the multitudes? Neither Jesus nor his disciples would be trusted as the Son of God, thereafter! Jesus had demonstrated his faith in the faithfulness of God. People's faith in Jesus had multiplied because of his own faith in His Father. Every challenge in life is an opportunity to bring glory to God by reposing our faith in Him. People believe what they experience, not merely what they hear.

At times Jesus performed miracles through his instructions, like when Peter and his fellow fishermen had a massive catch of fish (Luke 5:4). But at times he publicly acknowledged his own source of power as the Almighty God. The triggers to activate that source are gratitude and faith. Jesus desired to bring glory to God so that the disciples and others around him turn to God, for His mercy and grace. The purpose was not feeding 5,000 people but to sow the seed of God's grace and mercy in 5,000 hearts.

The incident amplifies the identity and relationship of Jesus with God, his Father. On the basis of that fact, we come to believe and trust Jesus' words. Every good deed has the objective to glorify God and repose our faith in Him. An act of faith points to the identity and character of Almighty God.

Fruitfulness in one's life is directly proportional to one's faith in God

In gratitude, for His glory

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



Are You Tired?

Isaiah 40:31 "Those who wait on the Lord will renew their strength; they will mount up with wings like eagles; they will run and not be weary; they will walk and not faint".

There are many all around the world who are weary, not just tired from lack of sleep, but weary in the depths of their souls. We are tired from many things – from too busy a lifestyle; from dealing with family issues; from coping with the death of a loved one; from being in lockdown or many from not being able to be in lockdown; from trying to home school children without the necessary resource; from not being able to go to work and worrying whether at the end we will still have a job; from all the gloomy news being brought to our living rooms on TV; from the frustration of others not being able to understand the implications of their actions or their words; from the muddle of dealing with a pandemic and with the economic results; from the political spin on all the different issues,

It is OK to be tired. Jesus was tired and He understands our tiredness, our weariness. You recall that Jesus fell asleep when in the boat with His disciples after a gruelling time dealing with the crowds who followed them – crowds looking for miracles, wanting to hear Jesus' teaching. Jesus was tired when He sat by the well and asked the Samaritan woman for a drink of water to revive Him. But Jesus knew that in order to restore His strength, as well as resting, He needed to draw near to His Father. For us too, we can draw our strength from spending time with the Lord as we are reminded in that text from Isaiah.

I wonder if you know the old hymn: "It is well with my soul". It is a wonderful song with an amazing story behind it. The words were written by Horatio G Spafford in the 19th century. He was a lawyer and a successful businessman from Chicago. His son died and then he lost his entire fortune in the great Chicago Fire of 1871. Some time after the fire he planned that he and his wife and four daughters would journey to Great Britain to have a rest and to help his good friend D.L. Moody in one of the Moody and Sankey missions. At the last minute Horatio had to stay behind to attend to some urgent business. On the way to Great Britain, the ship that his wife and daughters travelled on was in collision with another ship and sank. The survivors landed in Cardiff some days later and his wife sent him a telegram saying 'Saved alone...'. So Horatio lost all four of his daughters, one of whom was just a baby.

Quickly boarding another ship to England to join his wife, can you imagine how tired and weary of life Horatio must have felt having lost not only his wealth but all of his five children. He recorded that as the ship passed over the exact spot where his daughters had perished, he suddenly felt a 'peace that passes all understanding'. He recalled what his good friend Moody had once told him "one of these days you will read that D L Moody has died, but don't believe a word of that, because I will be more alive then, than I am now'. As he pondered these words with the Lord and thought of his beautiful girls, he said he felt the comfort of the Holy Spirit come on him. Then he went to his cabin and wrote the words of this hymn. It was when he drew close to the Lord that his hurt, pain and tiredness was washed with God's peace and undying love. So don't succumb to the weariness and the fear, but retreat to the comfort found in the arms of the Lord.

As you read the words of this amazing hymn and the story behind it, be encouraged that God will carry you through the troubled days.

*When peace like a river attendeth my way,
When sorrows like sea billows roll;*

Whatever my lot, thou hast taught me to say,
It is well, it is well with my soul.

Refrain:

*It is well,
With my soul
It is well, it is well with my soul.*

Though Satan should buffet, though trial should come,
Let this blessed assurance control,
That Christ has regarded my helpless estate,
And hath shed his own blood for my soul.

Refrain:

*It is well,
With my soul
It is well, it is well with my soul.*

My sin, oh, the bliss of this glorious thought!
My sin, not in part but the whole
Is nailed to the cross and I bear it no more
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, O my soul

Refrain:

*It is well,
With my soul
It is well, it is well with my soul.*

For me, be it Christ hence to live;
If Jordan above me shall roll,
No pang shall be mine, for in death as in life
Thou wilt whisper Thy peace to my soul.

Refrain:

*It is well,
With my soul
It is well, it is well with my soul.*

But Lord 'tis for Thee, for thy coming we wait,
The sky, not the grave is our goal,
Oh, trump of the angel! Oh, voice of the Lord!
Blessed hope, blessed rest of my soul.

Refrain:

*It is well,
With my soul
It is well, it is well with my soul.*

And Lord haste the day when my faith shall be sight
The clouds be rolled back as a scroll
The trump shall resound and the Lord shall descend
Even so, it is well with my soul.

Refrain:

*It is well,
With my soul
It is well, it is well with my soul.
”*

(I am sure the clever ones among you will be able to listen to this hymn online!! – I am sorry I can't give you a link)

Christine Osman, formerly Treasurer of TLMI



Finding your purposes

For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?" – Matthew 16:26

Are you living a life of purpose? What's the ultimate meaning of life? Why do you exist? Let's take a look at some of the ways people try to find the answers to these important questions.

We live in a very driven culture where most successful people set GOALS to help them stay motivated and focused as they pursue success. But here's the amazing thing: if we set goals just for the purpose of achievement or success, then very often we can reach those goals and still feel empty inside. You can find yourself once again restless and wondering if all this success is really all there is to life. Have you ever thought to yourself, "I've achieved everything that I sought to do; what now?" Believe it or not, goal setting is not the answer.

EDUCATION is another way to find meaning. Now, we know that education can certainly enrich our

understanding of life, but after reading some good inspirational books about successful people in the bible & some good books about successful people. Its even incredible academic success can still leave you feeling empty inside. Education isn't the answer.

Then there is WORK. When you pour yourself into your work, you will understand more about yourself – that's part of why God created us. Finding meaningful and fulfilling work is part of how we live a purposeful and full life. But even when you're successful at work, you can still be empty. No, work isn't the answer.

What about all the people and RELATIONSHIPS in our lives? I'm talking about friends, family members, and co-workers; now, I think we're getting close. While all of these relationships are important, you won't truly discover your life's purpose until you are in the ultimate relationship with **Jesus Christ**.

JESUS is the answer. Jesus is key to discovering your ultimate reason for living a purposeful Life.

Dorothy Owen – On Behalf of The Leprosy Mission PNG Fellowship Mission PNG Fellowship



Encouragement in short supply

Encouragement is an act of inspiring others with renewed courage, spirit, or hope. When we encourage others, we spur on, stimulate, and affirm people. What is the difference between affirmation and appreciation? When somebody does or achieves something good, we appreciate it. It is dependent on accomplishments and is earned. Affirmation goes deeper. It is directed to the person himself or herself. It is dependent on who the person is. We can still be affirmed even if we have failed to succeed or lacked accomplishment of some goal.

Barnabas from the New Testament was one such encouragement or affirmer. John Mark was a young associate of Paul and Barnabas. In the first missionary journey John Mark did something that made Paul angry, so he did not want to take John anymore. Barnabas thought otherwise. Hence Barnabas split up with Paul and they went different ways. Barnabas looked beyond accomplishments. He looked at who John Mark was. In this incident, Barnabas has nothing to encourage John for. There was nothing John had done to merit an appreciation. So, Barnabas chooses to affirm.

So, it is with our life. Encouragement and affirmation are in short supply. We are caught up in reports, deadlines, protocols, and statistics. We forget the faces and the lives beyond those word docs, excel sheets, PDFs and PPTs. And being in the digital world does not help either. We may be able to appreciate our colleagues, give a pat on the back, say a word or so but we may always not be able to do it especially when there are failures and no achievements. The choice that we can make is looking beyond, looking at the person created in God's image with a purpose.

Later we know what John Mark accomplished. He became useful to Paul in the ministry (2Timothy 4:9), was called a fellow worker in the ministry (Colossians 4:10, Philemon 1:23), Peter called him son (1Peter 5:13) and later on became one of the 4 men chosen by God to record the gospel account of Mark. Imagine what a loss it would have been if Barnabas had not given John Mark the second chance. Barnabas affirmed.

Who then was Barnabas? He was Joseph from Cyprus but was called by the name Barnabas. Why? because he was an encourager. Surprisingly, he was not known by his original name but by his character name, Barnabas which meant Son of encouragement.

Let us learn from the life of Barnabas. Let us be people, be people who look beyond mistakes, shortcomings, failures, not living up to the mark. Let us be people of second chances. Let us be encouragers and affirmers.

*Philippians 2 : 1-5 Therefore if there is any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy, fulfil my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind **let each esteem others better than himself**. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.*

Father, thank you for affirming me, let me make choices to affirm and appreciate others. Amen



The God Of Hope

“Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.” Romans 15:13 KJV

He is the God of Hope. Have you lost hope? Have you lost hope for the future? Have you lost hope in any area of your life? Maybe, fear has choked your hope. Maybe, failure and defeat has strangled your hope. Maybe, disappointment has suffocated your hope. Maybe, you’ve lost hope for something and you can’t figure out why. God is the Author and Architect of Hope. He can restore your hope in an instant. Surrender to Him. Lay prostrate at the feet of Jesus, for He is Hope. Place your hope in Christ.

Maybe, you’ve misdirected your hope. Maybe, you’ve made an idol of hoping in someone or something. Maybe, instead of placing your hope in God, you’ve placed your hope in man and in things. God gives us good things, but don’t let “good” things become gods.

Promotion is His. Wisdom is His. Influence is His. Resources are His. Wealth belongs to Him. Don’t focus on temporal things. Don’t worship the temporal — choose to worship God. Place your hope in Christ — He is the God of hope.

Your pit isn’t too deep.

Your valley isn’t too dark.

Let God reignite your hope. Let God restore your hope in Him.

You may be surrounded by lions who are looking to devour you — remember that God is more powerful than any lion that you may face.

God will even close the mouth of lions.

Submit and surrender to the God of Hope.

According to Strong’s Concordance, the Greek word for “Hope” is, ‘elpis’ (G1680) which means, “to anticipate usually with pleasure, expectation of good, the author of hope, or the thing hoped for.” May God restore your hope. May God give you peace and rest on every side. May He restore and reset your expectations. May He become the Author of your hope. May your love for God outweigh the “things” that you’re hoping for.

Place your hope in Him. Redirect your focus and shift your hope in Christ.



Psalm 69

For the director of music. To the tune of "Lilies." Of David.

¹ Save me, O God,
for the waters have come up to my neck.

² I sink in the miry depths,
where there is no foothold.
I have come into the deep waters;
the floods engulf me.

³ I am worn out calling for help;
my throat is parched.
My eyes fail,
looking for my God.

⁴ Those who hate me without reason
outnumber the hairs of my head;
many are my enemies without cause,
those who seek to destroy me.
I am forced to restore
what I did not steal.

⁵ You, God, know my folly;
my guilt is not hidden from you.

⁶ Lord, the LORD Almighty,
may those who hope in you
not be disgraced because of me;
God of Israel,
may those who seek you
not be put to shame because of me.

⁷ For I endure scorn for your sake,
and shame covers my face.

⁸ I am a foreigner to my own family,
a stranger to my own mother's children;

⁹ for zeal for your house consumes me,
and the insults of those who insult you fall on me.

¹⁰ When I weep and fast,
I must endure scorn;

¹¹ when I put on sackcloth,
people make sport of me.

¹² Those who sit at the gate mock me,
and I am the song of the drunkards.

¹³ But I pray to you, LORD,
in the time of your favor;
in your great love, O God,
answer me with your sure salvation.

¹⁴ Rescue me from the mire,
do not let me sink;
deliver me from those who hate me,
from the deep waters.

¹⁵ Do not let the floodwaters engulf me
or the depths swallow me up
or the pit close its mouth over me.

¹⁶ Answer me, LORD, out of the goodness of your love;
in your great mercy turn to me.

¹⁷ Do not hide your face from your servant;
answer me quickly, for I am in trouble.

¹⁸ Come near and rescue me;
deliver me because of my foes.

¹⁹ You know how I am scorned, disgraced and shamed;
all my enemies are before you.

²⁰ Scorn has broken my heart
and has left me helpless;
I looked for sympathy, but there was none,
for comforters, but I found none.

²¹ They put gall in my food
and gave me vinegar for my thirst.

²² May the table set before them become a snare;
may it become retribution and a trap.

²³ May their eyes be darkened so they cannot see,
and their backs be bent forever.

²⁴ Pour out your wrath on them;
let your fierce anger overtake them.

²⁵ May their place be deserted;
let there be no one to dwell in their tents.

²⁶ For they persecute those you wound
and talk about the pain of those you hurt.

²⁷ Charge them with crime upon crime;
do not let them share in your salvation.

²⁸ May they be blotted out of the book of life
and not be listed with the righteous.

²⁹ But as for me, afflicted and in pain—
may your salvation, God, protect me.

³⁰ I will praise God's name in song
and glorify him with thanksgiving.

³¹ This will please the LORD more than an ox,
more than a bull with its horns and hooves.

³² The poor will see and be glad—
you who seek God, may your hearts live!

³³ The LORD hears the needy
and does not despise his captive people.

³⁴ Let heaven and earth praise him,
the seas and all that move in them,
³⁵ for God will save Zion
and rebuild the cities of Judah.

Then people will settle there and possess it;
³⁶ the children of his servants will inherit it,
and those who love his name will dwell there.



Psalm 70

For the director of music. Of David. A petition.

¹ Hasten, O God, to save me;
come quickly, LORD, to help me.

² May those who want to take my life
be put to shame and confusion;
may all who desire my ruin
be turned back in disgrace.

³ May those who say to me, "Aha! Aha!"
turn back because of their shame.

⁴ But may all who seek you
rejoice and be glad in you;
may those who long for your saving help always say,
"The LORD is great!"

⁵ But as for me, I am poor and needy;
come quickly to me, O God.
You are my help and my deliverer;
LORD, do not delay.



What mirror do you use?

Probably you have heard someone saying to you: “Have you looked in the mirror?” Then you know that there is something wrong with your clothes or your hairstyle and you have something to fix. You didn’t see it, but the mirror reflects the reality and helps you to realize the truth about you.

“Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like someone who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. But whoever looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues in it—not forgetting what they have heard, but doing it—they will be blessed in what they do.” James 1:23-25

The first mirror for mankind was the water surface in a lake or a river. The water reflected the image and our ancestors could distinguish their faces and bodies. Later in history they took a piece of metal, perhaps copper, polish it and it could serve as a mirror, not very clear but could at least approximately helping to recognize the condition of the person.

What mirror do you use? Of course, today we have very good and clear mirrors with glass and silver layer for our bodies. But what mirror to use to see the truth and the correct projection of our soul? Or the condition of our spirit?

“For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.” 1 Cor. 13:12

The face of God is the perfect mirror of our inner being and the face of God is revealed in the Word of God, the Bible. When I open the Bible I can see the face of God but in that mirror I can see myself as well. There is a double exposure.

So each morning when I open my Bible I look into a mirror where I may see myself. I can see my way of acting, thinking, talking and reacting. David said in Psalm 139: *“You have searched me, LORD, and you know me... you are familiar with all my ways.”*

“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 Cor 3:18

When I look into the mirror of God’s word something will happen. I see myself and the face of God, and I will be transformed into his image and it’s done through the Holy Spirit. To be transformed is not a question of mobilizing my own moral or ethical muscles or to sharpen my religious resources. No. it’s only possible through the Holy Spirit.

“Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.” Rom 12:1

The Bible is the main product and manifestation of the Holy Spirit and is the means of transformation of my life and attitudes. *“For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.” Hebr 4:12*

So by meditating the Word of God we will experience how the two images, my face and God's face in the mirror, will be more and more melted together. We know that one day we will be transformed into his likeness in a perfect way. *"But we know that when Christ appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is."* 1 John 3:2

Allan Ekstedt, TLM Sweden



From Lord's Prayer... **forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors**

Matthew 6:12,14-15

Not only does a man need to realize that he needs to pray this petition of the Lord's Prayer; he also needs to realize what he is doing when he prays it. Of all petitions of the Lord's Prayer this is most frightening. "FORGIVE US OUR DEBTS AS WE FORGIVE OUR DEBTORS." The literal meaning is: Forgive us our sins in proportion as we forgive those who have sinned against us." In verses 14 and 15 says in plainest possible language that if forgive others, God will forgive us; but if we refuses to forgive others, God will refuse to forgive us. It is therefore, quite clear that, if we pray this petition with an unhealed breach, an unsettled quarrel in our lives, and then we are asking God not to forgive us.

Forgiveness is like peace, in one and indivisible. Human forgiveness and divine Forgiveness are inextricably inter-combined. Our forgiveness of our fellow –men and God's forgiveness of us cannot be separated: They are interlinked and inter dependent. If we remembered what we are doing when we take this petition on our lips, there would be times when we would not dare to pray it. If we are to have this Christian forgiveness in our lives, three things are necessary.

- (i) We must learn to *understand*: There is always a reason why a person does something. If he is rude, impolite and cross-tempered, maybe he is worried or in pain. If he treats us with suspicion and dislike, maybe he is misunderstood, or has been misinformed about something we have said or done. Maybe ne the man is the victim of his own environment or his own heredity. Maybe his temperament is such that life is difficult and human relations a problem for him. Forgiveness would be very much easier for us, if we tried to understand before we slowed ourselves to condemn.
- (ii) We must learn to *forget*: So long as we brood upon slight or an injury, there will be no hope that we will forgive. We so often say "I cannot forget what so – and –so did to me," or "I will never forget how I was treated by such- and – such a person or in such –and such place". These are dangerous sayings, because we can in the end make humanly impossible for us to forget. We can print the memory permanently upon our minds.
- (iii) We must learn to *Love*: We have already learnt that Christian love AGAPE, is that unconquerable benevolence, that undefeatable good –will, which will never seek anything but the highest good of others, no matter what they do to us, and no matter how they treat us. That love can come to us only when Christ, who is that love, come to dwell within our hearts – and He cannot come unless, we invite Him.

To be forgiven we must forgive, and that is a condition of forgiveness which only the power of Christ can enable us to fulfill.

Pradeep & Sarah Failbus - Worked for 39 years and 29 years with TLM(most at Anandaban,Nepal) Now retired and settled at: Kathgodam, District Nainital Uttarakhand, India



The Holy Alphabet

A lthough things are not perfect,
B ecause of trial or pain,
C ontinue in thanksgiving
D on't even think of whom to blame .
E ven when the times are hard,
F ierce winds are bound to blow,
G od is forever able to inspire
H old hard on to Jesus .
I magine life without His love,
J oy of life would cease to be,
K eep thanking Him for all the things
L ove imparts for you to see.
M ove out of Complaining ',
N o weapon that is known
O n earth can yield the power
P raise can do alone.
Q uit worrying about the future,
R edeem the time at hand,
S tart every day with prayer
T o 'thank' is God's command.

U ntil we see Him coming,

V ictorious in the sky,

W e'll run the race with gratitude,

X alting the Most High.

Y es, there'll be good times and yes some will be bad, but...

Z ion awaits in glory...where no one is ever sad!

Shared by Jill Courtnell and Christine Osman



Everybody is a Somebody in God's heart....!

On the southern outskirts of Pretoria, Republic of South Africa, there stood a big dilapidated house, which people avoided.

Why? – Because in it lived a hapless leprosy sufferer!

Parents warned their children not to go near it: “Why?” – “Because it’s a ‘Lazarus House’!”
“What’s that?”

“Stop asking so many questions, just do as you’re told!”

Luke 16:19-31 is the only Gospel parable in which the main role-player’s name is mentioned
Lazarus! The significance of this name unfolds, as we reflect on its Hebrew meaning:

The root-word of Lazarus is ‘El-asar’ - which also is the root-word for the name Eleasar.

These names mean ‘God will help’/‘God helps’/‘God has helped’!

Because Lazarus had a vital relationship with the true and living God in this parable, his ultimate help was an eternity of Heavenly comfort!

What is the bottom-line to this parable?

It is better to be a ‘Rich Poor-Man’ on earth, than a ‘Poor Rich-Man’ on earth!

Reflect on the following Scriptures:

Deuteronomy 33:27 – *“The eternal God is your Dwelling Place, and underneath are the everlasting arms.
And He thrust out the enemy before you.....”*

Isaiah 41:14 – *“Fear not, you worm Jacob, you men of Israel!
I am the One who helps you, declares the LORD;
your Redeemer is the Holy One of Israel.”*

Luke 10:20 – *“...rejoice that your name’s are written in Heaven.”*

Amen.

Otto Kingsley erstwhile Cape Regional Director - TLM Southern Africa



What is your shadow?

« I'm afraid, I feel lonely, I feel anxious, I suffer from work alcoholism, I'm a perfectionist, I have an insatiable need for affirmation, love and attention, I'm allergic to conflict.

Not just that...

My husband is more generous than I'm. My mother is more forgiving than I'm. My father is more focus than I'm and all my life I have felt I'm a sinner falling into the same traps over and over again and everyone being loved by God more than me... »

Wow! I did it. You are now thinking. Is she serious? Is she honest? Who is she? Yes I know her..... I can't believe it. She seems such a nice person, godly, she seems strong and confident... wow! but yes this is also who I'm and how I feel at times. This is « my shadow ».

I recently read chapter 2 of The emotional Healthy Leader from Peter Scazzero entitled »Face your shadow«. It made me think about my dark side, my inner labyrinth, my weaknesses and wounds. But you know what? I'm not totally bad but I'm not totally good either. Neither you are.

- *Romans 7:18 NKJ*

For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find.

- *2 Corinthians 5:17 NKJ*

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.

- *Psalms 139:14 WEB*

I will give thanks to you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Your works are wonderful. My soul knows that very well.

We are all a mixture of tensions. We are more than our shadow, but ignoring our shadow will undermine the best of us in Christ. I was touched to be reminded that there are no heroes and villains in life. We are all broken vessels but wonderfully made. We all have access to the cross' love and its forgiveness. We are made perfect in Christ. Our vulnerabilities can help us to thrive, to help other and to grow into a new personality in Christ when we are aware of them, when we name them, and when we ask for help and forgiveness for them. We then while we experience our nakedness, pain and scorching, loneliness and fear, the darkness and disparity of our shadow, we follow Christ to the cross where he takes away our sin and makes us perfect, while we receive God's grace love and forgiveness.

What is your shadow?

What has God forgiven you already for?

Why did Christ die for you?

How can you extend that same love to others today?



Psalm 71

- ¹ In you, LORD, I have taken refuge;
let me never be put to shame.
- ² In your righteousness, rescue me and deliver me;
turn your ear to me and save me.
- ³ Be my rock of refuge,
to which I can always go;
give the command to save me,
for you are my rock and my fortress.
- ⁴ Deliver me, my God, from the hand of the wicked,
from the grasp of those who are evil and cruel.
- ⁵ For you have been my hope, Sovereign LORD,
my confidence since my youth.
- ⁶ From birth I have relied on you;
you brought me forth from my mother's womb.
I will ever praise you.
- ⁷ I have become a sign to many;
you are my strong refuge.
- ⁸ My mouth is filled with your praise,
declaring your splendor all day long.
- ⁹ Do not cast me away when I am old;
do not forsake me when my strength is gone.
- ¹⁰ For my enemies speak against me;
those who wait to kill me conspire together.
- ¹¹ They say, "God has forsaken him;
pursue him and seize him,
for no one will rescue him."
- ¹² Do not be far from me, my God;
come quickly, God, to help me.
- ¹³ May my accusers perish in shame;
may those who want to harm me
be covered with scorn and disgrace.
- ¹⁴ As for me, I will always have hope;
I will praise you more and more.
- ¹⁵ My mouth will tell of your righteous deeds,
of your saving acts all day long—
though I know not how to relate them all.
- ¹⁶ I will come and proclaim your mighty acts, Sovereign LORD;
I will proclaim your righteous deeds, yours alone.
- ¹⁷ Since my youth, God, you have taught me,
and to this day I declare your marvelous deeds.
- ¹⁸ Even when I am old and gray,
do not forsake me, my God,

till I declare your power to the next generation,
your mighty acts to all who are to come.
¹⁹ Your righteousness, God, reaches to the heavens,
you who have done great things.
Who is like you, God?
²⁰ Though you have made me see troubles,
many and bitter,
you will restore my life again;
from the depths of the earth
you will again bring me up.
²¹ You will increase my honor
and comfort me once more.
²² I will praise you with the harp
for your faithfulness, my God;
I will sing praise to you with the lyre,
Holy One of Israel.
²³ My lips will shout for joy
when I sing praise to you—
I whom you have delivered.
²⁴ My tongue will tell of your righteous acts
all day long,
for those who wanted to harm me
have been put to shame and confusion.



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.



There's nothing like the call of a freshly painted boat at its moorings

Yesterday, as I was walking past our harbour, I noticed a new boat in the marina. On closer inspection, I found that it had been built by a local resident during the lockdown. He plans to row it to Rio de Janeiro, a distance of at least 6 000 kilometres. Rio is a popular destination for sailors from Cape Town, but this is the first time I've come across someone yearning to undertake the trip using nothing but their own strength. The strangest thing of all about this expedition is that there has been no fanfare. It seems that we have become so used to people undertaking long distance endurance adventures, that unless the planned mission is extraordinarily challenging, no-one pays much attention to it.

Not that long ago, the thought of rowing to Rio would have been considered 'epic', now people shrug their shoulders and go back to browsing on their phones. Have people become more daring? Has the number of adventure seekers increased to the point where the extraordinary has become part of the background hum of life?

Simon's Town has long been the launching platform for adventurers - at the entrance to the harbour are several reminders that it served as a base from which expeditions to the South Pole were launched in the late 1800s and early 1900s. Looking at the photos of those early expeditions, I'm reminded of the large teams involved - a handful of people reached the pole, but significant numbers of people helped them along the way. Now you can stitch a boat together in your backyard, drop it in the water and paddle your way across the Atlantic, with a minimum of fuss and assistance.

Sometimes, as Kingdom workers, we may feel that we belong to the latter category; that the burden of boatbuilding and boat paddling rests solely on our shoulders.

Moses found himself in that position and it was his father-in-law who had to step in and give advice [yes, I know, advice from in-laws, always a touchy subject ...]

'When his father-in-law saw all that Moses was doing for the people, he said, "What is this you are doing for the people? Why do you alone sit as judge, while all these people stand around you from morning till evening?" ... *"select capable men from all the people—men who fear God, trustworthy men who hate dishonest gain—and appoint them as officials over thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens."* ' [Exodus 18: 13 – 27]

None of us have been called to be ship's carpenter, oarsman and navigator. It's good to have people in our lives [but maybe not in-laws] who can help us see when we are falling into that trap and help us to start seeking out capable people who can share the load with us.

As we pray for each other today, let's pray that the Lord will send into each of our lives both Godly advisors and God-fearing, trustworthy people who can take hold of an oar alongside us, or the tiller behind us or the compass in front of us.

Let's be bold and daring for His sake - let's be prepared to row across the Atlantic - but remembering at all times that boldness does not mean unaided navigation.

Onesimus became a son to Paul whilst he was in chains. Let us pray that each of us will be sought out by our Onesimus, useful to us and to others.

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.



Nicodemus, the silent believer! – Part 1

We find references for Nicodemus at three places in the Book of *John* (3:1–21;7:50–51;19:39–42). God wants us to know about Nicodemus for a reason. If a man like Nicodemus does not qualify to enter the Kingdom of God, then who does? That is the question, and Jesus has the answer.

Context

John the Baptist had preached that Jesus was the Messiah/Saviour the Jews were looking forward to. Jesus is the fulfilment of the prophecies of all the prophets of the Old Testament. Nicodemus had either heard of or witnessed the miracles Jesus had performed, knowing fully well that he would never perform even one such miracle. Jesus was surpassing the authority and power of the Sanhedrin, the Jewish High Council.

Eminence of Nicodemus

A religious leader: He was a Jew, a Pharisee; this means he was one of the prominent religious leaders of his day. He tried to do everything just as it was written in his religious books. He wanted to keep every rule. He was a protector of the faith of the Jews. Pharisees were often proud and self-righteous. They looked down on those who did not meet their religious expectations.

A Jewish scholar and teacher: He was also very well educated in the Jewish sacred book, the Torah. He knew all there was to know about the religious system and practices of the Jews. A highly respected teacher of the Old Testament Scriptures.

A member of the Sanhedrin: Nicodemus was also a member of the Sanhedrin, the highest legal, legislative, and judicial body of the Jews at that time. It consisted of seventy men who were the custodians of the Jewish religious system. Only the greatest of men could be a part of this elite group. A member of the Sanhedrin was a member for life. It made them enormously powerful and revered. It usually meant they would be very wealthy too. The Sanhedrin decided everything for the Jewish people. All of this meant that Nicodemus had power and authority over people. He was a judge, university professor, legislator all rolled into one. Highly respected by the Jews and highly influential. A man of high social standing. His words and actions carried weight among the Jews.

An honest and inquisitive seeker: Behind his positional eminence, there is a person in Nicodemus. He came to confirm what the Sanhedrin suspected, the divinity of Jesus. He was a seeker of the truth. He had genuine questions on how a Jew can be saved because Jews are already the chosen people of God. So, what else must a Jew do, beyond the laws given by God, to have eternal life? He came alone, possibly not informing anyone in the Sanhedrin. Circumspect, not really knowing what to expect from Jesus. He was possibly like many of us when we first came to know Jesus, trying to ascertain the credentials of Jesus. He came seeking the truth. Something inside himself bothered him, he needed answers as a person. His deep seated desire/need compelled him to reach out to Jesus. Nicodemus chose to find Jesus at night possibly because he did not want the Sanhedrin to know it. He met Jesus face to face, man to man, heart to heart. Really wanted to know the truth in what Jesus was teaching.

What was Nicodemus' question and its significance?

Nicodemus called Jesus "Rabbi." That means he thought Jesus was a good teacher about the things of God. He told Jesus that He was a "teacher come from God." He sought the teaching on *how* to have eternal life and what must he do to acquire it. As a scholar in the Old Testament he knew of the eternal great "I Am" God. *He asked the most important question; how to have eternal life?* His quest was for the source of and

path to eternal life. It is a question that every man and woman faces. If we find out what we need but not how to receive it, it doesn't really help us. The question is the precursor to the revelation of the Gospel, Jesus is the Saviour and the path for eternal life.
For His glory, in gratitude.

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



Nicodemus, the silent believer! – Part 2

The profound and challenging response of Jesus to Nicodemus

The reason why Scriptures record Nicodemus's conversation with Jesus was that in spite of his achievements, eminence in education, politics and religion; Nicodemus had a great spiritual need. Jesus goes right to Nicodemus' need behind his question. Jesus knows that being spiritually dead, we all need a new, spiritual birth and life. We have a physical body that lives, but without God our spirit is dead. It is not enough to be born physically and have a living body. That body, no matter how much good it does, is never acceptable to God. We all need a new, spiritual birth. We need a Saviour; we need Jesus.

Jesus answered Nicodemus' "how" question. *He told him that he was born of the flesh in a physical way, a physical birth; but his spirit was still that of a sinner, not yet born of the Holy Spirit.* He needed a spiritual birth (born again) to have eternal life. His spirit needed to be touched by the Spirit of God, spiritually awakening to the truth of who Jesus is, the Saviour God. When we ask Jesus to come into our lives and forgive us of our sins, the Holy Spirit comes into our lives and gives us new spiritual life.

The new birth is from above (Spirit of God) and not achieved by the works of the human hand. Nicodemus must have known this because prophets have spoken about that (Jeremiah 31:33-34 and Ezekiel 36:25-36).

There is a big difference between being religious and being a Christian (one who has the spirit of Christ inside). One could not get much more religious than Nicodemus, but our Lord's words made it clear that as "religious" as he was, Nicodemus was not yet a Christian believer. He did not recognize Nicodemus' eminence. Jesus did not suggest a slight moral modification. He saw in Nicodemus a sinner to be saved and one who can enter God's kingdom only after a radical fresh start.

Jesus likens the saving work of God through His Spirit to the working of the wind (John 3:8). The effects of the wind can be seen, but the wind itself is not seen. The Holy Spirit lives the life of Jesus Christ through us; He transforms us into a new creation. The Holy Spirit manifests in the born again believer.

Outcome of Nicodemus' encounter with Jesus

Nicodemus went back after his encounter with Jesus possibly puzzled, momentarily at least. One can imagine the shocked look on Nicodemus' face when Jesus told him that his physical birth as a Jew will not save him, and that he must be reborn from above (The Holy Spirit). The Holy Spirit continued His work in Nicodemus since he was truthfully seeking eternal life.

The scholar, teacher, member of Jewish high council and authority on Jewish law was transformed by Jesus' death on the cross. He was saved (John 3:16-17). Nicodemus discovered a new spiritual birth. He first visited Jesus at night to confirm Jesus' identity and His teachings (John 3:1-21). At the second time we hear Nicodemus speak to the unbelieving Pharisees against unlawfully seizing Jesus (John 7:50-51). Finally, Nicodemus appears after the crucifixion of Jesus to provide the customary embalming spices and assists Joseph of Arimathea in preparing the body of Jesus for the Jewish burial (John 19:39-42). At that time Nicodemus publicly reveals himself as a born again believer in Jesus Christ. The religiosity of Nicodemus rooted in the law was transformed into a relationship with God by the grace of Jesus Christ.

When the Holy Spirit brings in new birth, the effect is evident. The work of God's Spirit is unseen and beyond man's understanding. Salvation is the sovereign work of God, accomplished by the Holy Spirit. Believing in Jesus is the key to eternal life. To believe is to rely, depend and trust. For eternal life law/religion is not the answer, but the Saviour is.

The one who seeks the Saviour shall find Him.

For His glory, in gratitude.

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



A new passion to be a “House of Prayer – 1.

Some thoughts for growing closer to Our Heavenly Father and becoming more like Jesus. Jesus said: *Matthew 21.13* *It is written,’ he said to them, ‘ “My house will be called a house of prayer,” but you are making it “a den of robbers.”*

What was the setting behind Jesus saying this? *Matthew 21:12-16 NIVUK* *Jesus entered the temple courts and drove out all who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money-changers and the benches of those selling doves. ‘It is written,’ he said to them, ‘ “My house will be called a house of prayer,” but you are making it “a den of robbers.” The blind and the lame came to him at the temple, and he healed them. But when the chief priests and the teachers of the law saw the wonderful things he did and the children shouting in the temple courts, ‘Hosanna to the Son of David,’ they were indignant. Do you hear what these children are saying?’ they asked him. Yes,’ replied Jesus, ‘have you never read, “From the lips of children and infants you, Lord, have called forth your praise”?*

As we Jesus was living in the Old Testament setting where the temple was the place where you went to meet God & the priest of the was your link & connection to God Jesus’s dying on the cross & raising from the dead totally changed everything!

1. The temple curtain was torn from the top to the bottom exposing the citadel of God’s presence for all to see
2. The high priest sewed up the curtain & continued the old style of having church where a building was the centre of worship
3. So in AD 70 the Romans totally destroyed the temple. That style of serving God was finished! Kaput, done with! Jesus created the New Testament style of expectation that God has for us

Acts 7:48-50 NIVUK *However, the Most High does not live in houses made by human hands. As the prophet says: ‘ “Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool. What kind of house will you build for me? says the Lord. Or where will my resting-place be? Has not my hand made all these things?”’* Luke tells us under the inspiration of Holy Spirit that we’ll never find God in a building that has been built by human hands! So what now, where do we find Him? Paul fills in the blanks for us! *1 Corinthians 3:16-17 NIVUK* *Don’t you know that you yourselves are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit lives among you? If anyone destroys God’s temple, God will destroy that person; for God’s temple is sacred, and you together are that temple.”*

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.



A new passion to be a “House of Prayer – 2.

Can I dare say? 🙏 God moved from a building built by human hands to a body! 🙏 To a person that's been saved, redeemed by the precious shed blood of Jesus! Prayer must be birthed, bathed & practiced out of my relationship with God, not out of need! *James 5:16 NKJV The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much. Let's look at the rest of what Jesus said: ...but you are making it “a den of robbers.”* What was He meaning when He said this? I think that when He looked at the wheelers and dealers in the temple He saw this:

1. They had no relationship with God!
 2. They were using God, taking advantage of Him
 3. They were taking & wanting to take with no relationship with Him
 4. They wanted God's favour with no relationship
 5. Like thieves & robbers
- A righteous person is simply a person in a right relationship with Our Heavenly Father • That person has the right to ask because of a relationship

Pray that God would awaken the passion inside of you to live for Him and Him alone.

Ask God to set a fire within you—a hunger for more of Him and His Word.

Pray that your desire to be close to God would only continue to increase.

Spend a few minutes remembering and journaling about how you felt when you first came to know Jesus.




Ask God to make you feel that way again.

Cry out: “Holy Spirit stir inside of me to have a new passion for my God” I know much has been said & written about prayer but these are just a few thoughts:

- Through the years that I've known my God my level of passion towards Him can often be measured by the time I spend in prayer & how I pray.
- Not always but sometimes.
- Times of need seem to intensify my prayer mode, times of blessing, lighter & less intense.
- Then there are times when life is sort-of settled, no needs, no requests
- ...this can be a danger zone for lack-lustre prayers.

A loss of passion for praying. Paul is writing to the Ephesian church & has this to say: *Ephesians 3:14-21 NIVUK For this reason I kneel before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name. I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge – that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God. Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.”* Could Paul be saying: “Stay hungry for God! Look & understand from deep down inside of you, know who you are because of Jesus & what He wants us to do on behalf of heaven & His Bride, The Church.” Pray for more passion for Our Heavenly Father & His mission to reach & save the lost! ✨ **Passion promotes prayer!** This requires **passion needs discipline** particularly in our prayer lives. 🤔 How do we develop this? Paul gives us a few clues.

1. **Decide to start praying.** Set aside time & place to pray. (...I kneel before the Father...)
2. **Don't be repetitive** in your praying, assign a subject, a topic for each day & pray into that. Don't be afraid to change if needs be. (...out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being...)
3. **Know that our God is able to direct & answer** our discussion with Him. (... who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine...)
4. **Let love be your motivation for praying.** Love towards Our Heavenly Father & others. (...established in love - to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ,...)
5. **Prayer is influential**, to bring to Jesus the Christ & to the generations that follow us. (... to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations...) *Romans 15:5-6 NIVUK* **May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you the same attitude of mind towards each other that Christ Jesus had, so that with one mind and one voice you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.**

 *Make prayer count,*
 *Prayer is more important than you think.*
 *Pray from the position of a relationship*

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.



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.



Psalm 74

A maskil of Asaph.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

⁹ We are given no signs from God;
no prophets are left,

and none of us knows how long this will be.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



Reminder of our Call to Service – Part 1

Those of us that profess the Christian faith are probably familiar with the concept of ‘calling’ in the scriptures. There are many well-known stories of people who were called:

- God called Abraham to be the father and founder of the nation of Israel (*Genesis 22:11–13*)
- God called Moses to lead the Israelites out of slavery in Egypt (*Exodus 3:1–10*)
- God called Samuel to be priest, prophet, and leader of Israel (*1 Samuel 3:1–10*)
- And in the new testament, Jesus called twelve men to be His apostles (*Matthew 4:18-22; Mark 1:16-34; Luke 5:1-11*), and later on called Saul (who later became the Apostle Paul), to carry the Good News to the nations. (*Acts 9*)

There are others, but these stories are quite striking because they are about people that God called by name, sometimes in a rather dramatic way. Each of these persons heard God’s voice clearly calling them to take on a particular assignment, and they responded, and it is probably because of that response that we still read about them today.

In the modern world we also have instances of people being called.

I was in a Zoom meeting on Friday with Peter Waddup, who is our National Director at TLMEW, and he talked about how he came to be working at the Leprosy Mission. He visited India as a young man, and while he was there, he came in contact with people affected by leprosy. The impact that this encounter made never left him, and so years later, when someone came to his Church to speak about The Leprosy Mission, he immediately felt that God was calling him to serve people affected by leprosy. He answered the call by becoming a volunteer for The Leprosy Mission, and he volunteered for 9 years before he became National Director in 2017.

Some of us may also have our own stories of how God called us. We might not all have heard God’s call as dramatically as Moses, who heard God speak to him from a burning bush, or Saul, who was converted after being struck blind by a bolt of lightning on the road to Damascus, or even Peter Waddup. Nonetheless, God has called each one of us to follow Him, and He continues to call us each and every day. The Bible says in *1 Peter 2:9*: “*You are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His wonderful light.*”

God has called us all out of darkness and into light. This call is first and foremost an invitation to a restored relationship with God himself. We are called to recognize God’s holiness and power, to acknowledge our own weakness before Him, and invite Him to be the Lord of our lives. Many who have responded to this call refer to it as ‘giving their lives to Christ’.

But there is a second part to the call, which is an invitation to a right relationship with other people and with the world around us. It is a call to participate in God’s ongoing redemptive or restorative work. God seeks to restore all of creation to its original wholeness and beauty, and He expects us, His children, to participate in this task. This is why St James says so emphatically in scripture that faith without works is dead (*James 2:14-26*). We are called to believe (through faith) but we are also called to contribute towards the advancement of God’s kingdom on earth (through works).



Reminder of our Call to Service – Part 2

Thankfully, all of us that work for The Leprosy Mission have the wonderful opportunity to answer this call on a day to day basis. Each time we take action to prevent someone from getting infected with leprosy, or arrest their progression from less severe or sub-clinical leprosy to more severe clinical forms of the disease, or treat reactions, or reconstruct a limb, or support people with disabilities, we are contributing towards bringing the world closer to what God originally intended it to be, and so we are taking part in God's redemptive work.

We are not just 'doing our jobs'; we are helping to heal the world, one person at a time. When you are just doing a job, you tend to count the cost, and if you are consistently called upon to give more to the work than what you perceive to be the equivalent value of the dollars you are being paid, you will quickly become dissatisfied. But when you answer a call to do God's work, you just go out each day and give your best with a cheerful and happy heart, and God supplies the grace you need to stay committed and compassionate, and even to go the extra mile when needed.

I read a research article a while back about a study that examined the concept of "being called" among physicians. The researchers defined a calling as "a transcendent summons to a meaningful career that is used to serve others". The study found that physicians who felt 'called' to study medicine reported higher levels of career satisfaction, stronger commitment, and greater resilience to burnout than those that did not have a calling, that perhaps chose medicine because they were good at science, or saw it as a lucrative career (Yoon, Daley & Curlin, 2017)¹.

The article linked to many others on the same subject, with fairly consistent results. I was quite surprised to find that such a topic was being researched in mainstream academia even though I was not surprised by the findings! So, as doctors, nurses, laboratory scientists, researchers, community health workers, program managers whatever your role, what you do is really special. You are blessed everyday by the work you do, and you are also bringing blessings to others by doing this work. You are following a vocation, not too different from the vocation that priests and pastors have. It is a ministry, not just a job.

Let us be encouraged by this reminder. We are all aware of this calling, but there are often times when we have so much to do, times when we are facing so many challenges in our work, times like what we are going through currently, when COVID-19 is placing an extra burden on us all, and we can sometimes forget why we signed up to do this work. It is precisely at those times that we need to remember that this is God's work, and since we are responding to His call, we can rely on Him to supply the grace to do it and do it well.

I would like to conclude with a short prayer*:

Loving God, it is you that has called us to this work, and gifted us with the knowledge and capacity to diagnose, to heal, to restore and to offer peace through our role in The Leprosy Mission. Help us to be signs of love and compassion in the world today — honouring each person affected by leprosy that we meet, and all those in need of our service. When our burdens are heavy, renew us, refresh us, remind us of the blessing of our calling

¹ Yoon, J. D., Daley, B. M., & Curlin, F. A. (2017). The association between a sense of calling and physician well-being: a national study of primary care physicians and psychiatrists. *Academic Psychiatry*, 41(2), 167-173.

and reawaken our commitment to this ministry. May your grace always be sufficient for us. We pray in Jesus name. Amen.

(*Prayer adapted from the United States Catholic Health Association (USCHA) Prayer for Health Workers²)

Joanna Nwosu - Deputy Head of Programmes – TLM England and Wales

² <https://www.chausa.org/docs/default-source/prayers/prayer-for-health-care-workers.docx?sfvrsn=2>



Shouldn't you repent?

"Don't just say to each other, 'We're safe, for we are descendants of Abraham.'" Matt 3: 7-10

It was Dame Edith Mary Evans, one of the finest actresses of the English-speaking stage during the 20th century who said, "I can't imagine going on when there are no more expectations". When John the Baptist called for repentance because the Kingdom of God was at hand, I wonder what those who responded expected, or if he knew the details of what to expect. There is expectation, which made all kinds of people to respond to John the Baptist's call, even the Pharisees and the Sadducees who he called, 'brood of vipers' in Matthew 3, responded. That expectation gave soul and life to their response.

When people have an expectation, they get motivated and they create room for fulfilment. Brian Tracy is one of the most listened to audio author on personal and business successes in the world today. He said "Whatever we expect with confidence becomes our own self-fulfilling prophecy."

In current times the world over we mourn over the biting recession in economy, public health and even spiritual wellbeing. Our collective and background expectation is to overcome these woes and be refreshed to be up and about again.

The story of a group of frogs offers some explanation. The frogs were traveling through the woods, and two of them fell into a deep pit. All the other frogs gathered around the pit. When they saw how deep the pit was, they told the two frogs that they were as good as dead. The two frogs ignored the comments and tried to jump out of the pit with all of their might. The other frogs kept telling them to stop, that they were dead already. Finally, one of the frogs took heed to what the other frogs were saying, gave up, fell down and died. The other frog continued to jump as hard as he could. Once again the crowd of frogs yelled at him to stop the pain and just die. He jumped even harder and finally made it out. When he got out, the other frogs shouted in excitement, "Did you not hear us?" The frog said, "No, I am deaf. I don't hear well, only very closely. I thought you were encouraging me the entire time".

The freed frog had hearing problems. His interpretation of what he heard created an expectation for him, he thought they were cheering him to make it. The expectation saved him. So we see that existence without expectations robs it of its soul. What we should be doing now is not to morn over the adverse economic, health and spiritual situations that we are going through. The attitude of indifference, coldness and worldliness exhibited by Christians today is devoid of the greater expectation, that as we work in strong trust of our Savior Jesus Christ, one day we would get respite from Him. And we should prepare to meet Him. At times like this, God's wrath will be further unleashed on as many as reject Him and may we not be among them. The cry in the wilderness is calling us to repentance, to live our lives to with met expectations of getting the very best from God, and get out of this deep pit of pain and misery.

We could pray thus:

Lord Jesus, let Your expectations of me inspire me to commitment and draw me closer to You as I 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.

Authors in Alphabetical Order

Textuarium

Allan Ekstedt	14 Sept	Exodus 18,13-27	21 Sept
Asaph, psalmist	26, 27 Sept	Numbers 6,24-26	3 Sept
Christine Osman	3 and 16 Sept	Book of Nehemiah	3 Sept
Damaris Villanueva	18 Sept	Psalms 67	5 Sept
Dan Izzett	24, 25 Sept	Psalms 68	6 Sept
David, king of Israel	6, 12, 13 Sept	Psalms 69	12 Sept
Dorothy Owen	9 Sept	Psalms 70	13 Sept
Élie Fofolo Rev	1 Sept	Psalms 71	19 Sept
Helen Walton	11 Sept	Psalms 72	20 Sept
James Pender	2 Sept	Psalms 73	26 Sept
Jill Courtnell	16 Sept	Psalms 74	27 Sept
Joanne Nwosu	28, 29 Sept	Isaiah 40,31	8 Sept
Joydeepa Darlong MD	10 Sept	Proverbs 15,22	1 Sept
Moses Onoh MD	30 Sept	Matthew 3,7-10	30 Sept
Otto Kingsley	4 and 17 Sept	Matthew 6,12-15	15 Sept
Pradeep and Sarah Failbus	15 Sept	Matthew 16,26	9 Sept
Peter Laubscher	21 Sept	Matthew 21,13	24 Sept
Raju PLN Dr	7, 22 and 23 Sept	Mark 6,30-44	7 Sept
Solomon, king of Israel	20 Sept	Luke 16, 19-31	17 Sept
		John 3,1-21	22 and 23 Sept
		Romans 7,18	18 Sept
		Romans 15,13	11 Sept
		Philippians 2,1-5	10 Sept
		Hebrews	4 Sept
		1 Peter 2,9	28 and 29 Sept
		James 1,23-25	14 Sept
		James 5,16	25 Sept

The Bridge

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