



TLM Daily Devotions

April 2022





Christ Jesus

⁶ Who, being in very nature God,
did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage;

⁷ rather, he made himself nothing
by taking the very nature of a servant,
being made in human likeness.

⁸ And being found in appearance as a man,
he humbled himself
by becoming obedient to death—
even death on a cross!

⁹ Therefore God exalted him to the highest place
and gave him the name that is above every name,

¹⁰ that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

¹¹ and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.

Philippians 2,6-11

Blessed Easter, TLM!



Do the psalms have anything to say about the war in Ukraine? – Part 1

Since the start of 2021, I have been reading a psalm each day. I am now on my third iteration.

So it was that on Tuesday, 22 February when Russian tanks first moved into the Donbas region of Ukraine I 'happened' to be reading Psalm 120 which begins with the words: *I call on the Lord in my distress and he answers me.*

On Wednesday, as Ukrainians experienced their first full day of war Psalm 121 began: *I lift up my eyes to the hills, where does my help come from?*

On Thursday, as Christians in and beyond Ukraine prayed for the situation Psalm 122 began: *I rejoiced with those who said to me; 'Let us go to the house of the Lord'.*

On Friday as world leaders continued to meet to consider and implement sanctions against President Putin, Psalm 123 encouraged me *to lift up my eyes to you ... whose throne is in heaven.*

Stories of local resistance suggested that the success of the invasion might not be as swift as President Putin had thought or hoped, so I was reassured on Saturday when Psalm 124 asserted that *if the Lord had not been on our side ... when men attacked us ... they would have swallowed us alive.*

Psalm 125, which I read on Sunday begins with the words: *Those who trust in the Lord are like Mount Zion, which cannot be shaken but endures for ever.*

The comfort and calm of suburban London cannot begin to compare with the chaos and fear faced by the citizens of Kyiv. And the fact that I am reading a Psalm each day is unlikely to be of much comfort to those spending their third, fourth and fifth night in an underground car park or metro station. Nor will it deter President Putin, allegedly a professing Christian, from pursuing his murderous and misguided aims.

And yet ...

These six Psalms, written some 2,500 years ago, have compelled me, like the various writers of the Psalms to wrestle again with the seeming contradiction between a God of steadfast love and faithfulness on the one hand and, on the other hand, the current daily reality for many of deprivation and violence, even death at the hands of a hated enemy.

Reflecting on Psalm 121 Malcolm Guite has written [1] that *the restless drum of my anxiety is stilled ... by the loving presence (of God) which fills and overflows my heart, and challenges us with his claim, when considering Psalm 122, that wars will only cease when we refuse to fight.*

David Parry - David Parry was a member of the TLM England and Wales Board from 1990 to 2002 and its Chairman from 1995 to 2002, and a member of the TLM International Board from 2001 to 2013 and its Chairman from 2009 to 2013. He is currently enrolled on a Certificate in Theology course at St Albans Cathedral, England where he has been a Guide since 2009.

[1] Guite, Malcolm (2021): David's Crown: Sounding the Psalms, Norwich, Canterbury Press



Psalm 59

For the director of music. To the tune of "Do Not Destroy." Of David. A miktam. When Saul had sent men to watch David's house in order to kill him.

1 Deliver me from my enemies, O God;
be my fortress against those who are attacking me.

2 Deliver me from evildoers
and save me from those who are after my blood.

3 See how they lie in wait for me!
Fierce men conspire against me
for no offense or sin of mine, LORD.

4 I have done no wrong, yet they are ready to attack me.
Arise to help me; look on my plight!

5 You, LORD God Almighty,
you who are the God of Israel,
rouse yourself to punish all the nations;
show no mercy to wicked traitors.

6 They return at evening,
snarling like dogs,
and prowl about the city.

7 See what they spew from their mouths—
the words from their lips are sharp as swords,
and they think, "Who can hear us?"

8 But you laugh at them, LORD;
you scoff at all those nations.

9 You are my strength, I watch for you;
you, God, are my fortress,

10 my God on whom I can rely.
God will go before me

and will let me gloat over those who slander me.

11 But do not kill them, Lord our shield,
or my people will forget.
In your might uproot them
and bring them down.

12 For the sins of their mouths,
for the words of their lips,
let them be caught in their pride.

For the curses and lies they utter,
13 consume them in your wrath,
consume them till they are no more.

Then it will be known to the ends of the earth
that God rules over Jacob.

14 They return at evening,
snarling like dogs,
and prowl about the city.

15 They wander about for food
and howl if not satisfied.

16 But I will sing of your strength,
in the morning I will sing of your love;
for you are my fortress,
my refuge in times of trouble.

17 You are my strength, I sing praise to you;
you, God, are my fortress,
my God on whom I can rely.



Psalm 60

For the director of music. To the tune of "The Lily of the Covenant." A miktam of David. For teaching. When he fought Aram Naharaim and Aram Zobah, and when Joab returned and struck down twelve thousand Edomites in the Valley of Salt.

- 1** You have rejected us, God, and burst upon us;
you have been angry—now restore us!
- 2** You have shaken the land and torn it open;
mend its fractures, for it is quaking.
- 3** You have shown your people desperate times;
you have given us wine that makes us stagger.
- 4** But for those who fear you, you have raised a banner
to be unfurled against the bow.
- 5** Save us and help us with your right hand,
that those you love may be delivered.
- 6** God has spoken from his sanctuary:
"In triumph I will parcel out Shechem
and measure off the Valley of Sukkoth.
- 7** Gilead is mine, and Manasseh is mine;
Ephraim is my helmet,
Judah is my scepter.
- 8** Moab is my washbasin,
on Edom I toss my sandal;
over Philistia I shout in triumph."
- 9** Who will bring me to the fortified city?
Who will lead me to Edom?
- 10** Is it not you, God, you who have now rejected us
and no longer go out with our armies?
 - 11** Give us aid against the enemy,
for human help is worthless.
 - 12** With God we will gain the victory,
and he will trample down our enemies.



The Word became flesh

Truth & Light in Jesus

John 1:9 "The true light that gives light to every man was coming into the world."

The Word had entered the world order that He himself had created. In Jesus Christ, the Word of God came to dwell amongst us. John said, if you wish to see the creative power of God, the Word which brought the world into existence and which gives light and life to every human being, look unto Jesus Christ, and no further.

The truth is that God and Jesus have always been together in the Triune God. Only when Jesus came into our world did man fully see what God has been from eternity. In Jesus Christ the distant, unknowable, invisible, unreachable God has come to save man. That is the truth. It means none can tell us what God is like, what God's will is for us, what God's love for us is and what God's heart for us is as truthfully as Jesus Christ can. He is the Son of God whether one believes and accepts that fact or not. One may deny the truth, but the truth is true. None can falsify that fact; however hard Satan tries.

The phrase "grace and truth" points to the faithfulness of God who had sent Jesus Christ his only begotten Son to our world to save us. Jesus did not come to talk to man about God. He came to show man what God is like so that the simplest of the minds among us might come to know God intimately. Jesus Christ shines light on man's darkness of sin so that man can see the divine truth of God in Him. The light reveals man's sin and God's truth concomitantly. Without the light that Jesus gives us man will continue to be blinded by Satan's deceptions, allurements and falsehoods. Then man can never enjoy the presence of the compassionate Almighty God. Jesus breaks the spell of darkness of sin on human soul. We are freed from the bondage of darkness of sin. We are redeemed as children of God.

What has come to man is what J. H. Bernard calls "the exhibition to the world of God in Christ". Jesus reveals the very character of God. In Jesus Christ we see the very mind of God, the attitude of God towards man. If we believe that, then we also believe that God is like Jesus; kind, compassionate and loving. In Jesus there dwelt the totality of wisdom, power and love of God. The redemptive love of God has no boundaries. Jesus is inexhaustible in the outpouring of his grace to us. One can submit to Jesus for the redemption of his soul and never find Jesus wanting. Our hope of salvation is Jesus Christ.

The true light which gives light to every person has come into our world. It is not that the Word 'contains' light and life; Jesus is the light and life. They are personified in Jesus Christ. Therefore, without Jesus Christ we are dead in darkness. We are lost in the world. We do not know who God is. Jesus came not only with the knowledge but with the power of God. He came to show us the right way, enable us to walk it and be reconciled to the Holy God.

Left to ourselves we are at the mercy of our physical passions and fears. Jesus Christ brings to us the light of revelation. Without Jesus we are like a man travelling on an unknown road in utter darkness trying to reach an unspecified destination. His coming had dispelled the darkness of our spiritual separation from God. The truth of Jesus Christ liberates us from the estrangement with God; it liberates us from our fears, weaknesses and failures. Our destination, the mercy seat of God in heaven.

We can truly know ourselves only through the eyes of Jesus Christ. He reveals the evil in us like a mirror. When man receives and believes in the light of Jesus, man walks no longer in darkness. With the wisdom that Jesus gives us we break forth from the darkness of sin into the light of grace of God. Jesus Christ is the greatest liberator of our souls. The light of reason, as well as the life of purpose are derived from Jesus Christ. The man who continually grows into the likeness of Jesus Christ experiences great joy as a co-traveller with Him in this world. New revelations will dawn upon his soul every day. In the presence of Jesus, the soul rejoices as the spiritual darkness is dispelled.

Jesus is the true light for the human soul

In gratitude for His grace and for His glory

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

A Story of Change



Moussa, teaching a young student the braille alphabet.

My name is Moussa Souleymane.

I am a teacher in an inclusive primary school in the province of Salamat, Chad. This year we started a special education programme for children with visual impairment. Initially, I had four pupils including a young man of 23 years, who became blind about 7 years ago.

His eye disease caused severe blindness and he had no hope for the future. However, after teaching him to read and write in Braille, I have sent him to another school to prepare him for high school in a larger city. He is so happy now.... he is bright and courageous and is beginning to dream about his future.

The three other pupils in my class are younger. Currently I am teaching them the braille alphabet. These children have never been to school as there was no braille education in our province.

Let me tell you my own story. When I was 13 years old, I lost my eyesight due to measles.

A year later, I met the TLM-team on a leprosy supervision visit to our area. They told me about a 'blind school', one of their partner projects in a neighboring province. I moved there and started braille education. I finished high school and then obtained my primary teacher's diploma.

I then returned to my own province. It has been my dream to start braille education for children with visual impairment in my own area, and this is what I am doing now.

In the whole of the village where I was born, not a single child ever attended school. Today I am a teacher in the capital of our province. I am able to give a future to visually impaired children and am able to look after myself.

During my journey I came to know Jesus, and I would like to follow Him. It is a difficult process to become a Christian as my family is Muslim and changing faith in our area can be dangerous.

Please pray for me...

Moussa Souleymane – teacher, Salamat, TLM Chad



My society thought about leprosy

Matthew 11: 5 (TB) The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cured, the deaf people hear, the dead are raised and to the poor good news is preached.

In our society nowadays, many people still think that leprosy is a curse from God or a curse from the ancestors which has come from the cultural beliefs. Usually, society will blame the person affected by leprosy and the affected persons, we just have to accept it as there are no other words or way to defend ourselves.

To change the society mindset about the disease of leprosy, people need to be informed, communicated with, and educated, properly and continuously. My own experienced was when I and my family received information and counseling support from the Leprosy Mission Timor Leste, my family started to change all their attitudes towards me and gradually my neighbors and society accept me as I am, a human being as they are.

When I caught leprosy, I was only 9 years old and even the health workers at the time did not know that it was leprosy, my sister also a nurse at the time didn't know about leprosy, so I had the disease with me and suffered for a long time. I lived in a very rural area, and I lost hope and joy because I had been 'indirectly separated' from my own family, they put me in the special room with my own bed and my own dishes. There was no friend to play with me, neighbors and society kept their distance as they said I had an evil spirit with me.

No one had ever diagnosed me correctly, until the Leprosy Mission Timor Leste visited my village to introduce the Leprosy Mission program to the community and health workers. My sister was also there and got me to tested and I was diagnosed and started treatments for 1 year since then.

The Leprosy Mission also supported me to build my relationship with God. When I believed 'Jesus heals leprosy', He gave me hope that, I would be cured, have a future, education, got job, got married, have a kid, get recognition from the society that I am not disabled, I am able....all because I have Jesus.

Joel Costa Dos Santos

Advocay Officer, TLM Timor Leste.



Overcoming resentment

And I saw that all toil and all achievement spring from one person's envy of another. This too is meaningless, a chasing after the wind. Ecclesiastes 4:4

Resentment at the workplace is quite common and most of us have faced it at least once. It is an invisible emotion that seriously impacts productivity, morale, and collaboration at the workplace. It forces you to quit jobs unplanned and lose out on great opportunities. How we handle it makes all the difference to our emotional well-being and our work itself.

A colleague completed his postgraduation and chose to work for missions. As days went by, we noticed a change in his behaviour. His zeal for work was diminishing, colleagues complained of impatience and rudeness. We gently probed. His friends in the corporate sector had state of art facilities and cushy pay packets. They told he was wasting his life and he felt 'left behind'. Unhappiness and unpleasantness rose from that simmering resentment.

In the parable of the workers in the vineyard, we hear the same resentment. *When they received it (wages), they began to grumble against the landowner. 'These who were hired last worked only one hour,' they said, 'and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the work and the heat of the day.'* Matt 20: 11-12. As soon as workers glanced at the pay packet of their colleagues their demeanour changed. The murmurings were admonished and explained. Jesus warns against envying the blessings of others. It was the generosity of the Master that was in action.

Whatever be the reason, resentment pops its ugly head every now and then. A twinge of jealousy when his presentation is applauded or her proposal is accepted. It is called the comparison trap and soon turns into anger and discouragement. Does it sound familiar? Jesus warns us in this apt parable. Take your wage and go. Do not focus on what you have lost or what could have been yours. Stop comparing. It is the Father's generosity and His pleasure to bless whom He wills. Letting go of resentment will empower each believer to experience the greater things in the Lord.

Retrospect, recognize and root out.

Lord, guard my heart from bitterness and resentment. Empower me to look for ways to bless you, rejoice in all I have and seek contentment.



Walking Back to Happiness

Walking With God

Genesis 6:9

These are the records of the generations of Noah. Noah was a righteous man, blameless in his time; Noah walked with God.

I do not know why the rock song “Walking Back to Happiness” came to my mind, but it struck me that this is what we need to do right now. Many people sing or hum as they go about their business and if this is something you enjoy, no one is stopping you. The events of the last two years have been traumatic for all of us, and for some people there have been traumas unrelated to Covid 19. There is no going back. We have learned so many things in the last two years. We are all two years older. The children have grown up, the last thing they want is to go back to the class they were in two years ago.

And the rest of us, we may wish to go back to normal but if we are honest we do not know what normal means any more. We can only do our best prayerfully and thoughtfully. Each time we go out we ask ourselves is my journey necessary? Many of us worry about climate change and the environment more than we did two years ago. Should I use my car or should I use public transport? Can I justify owning a car? How many air miles may I fly? And the inevitable domestic query, can I recycle this? And now we have to plan a new budget. How much to spend on food and warmth as the costs soar. Will this leave anything over to spend on leisure activities? Probably a lot less than previously so we need to rethink our leisure time.

Well, as my next musical* says “You’ll never walk alone”.

Noah faced many challenges and his decision was to walk with God.

Rosemary Tootle, volunteer Purulia 1968-69. Volunteer International Office since retiring from the NHS.

*Carousel, which was released in the USA in 1945, at the end of the Second World War.



Psalm 61

For the director of music. With stringed instruments. Of David.

- 1** Hear my cry, O God;
listen to my prayer.
- 2** From the ends of the earth I call to you,
I call as my heart grows faint;
lead me to the rock that is higher than I.
- 3** For you have been my refuge,
a strong tower against the foe.
- 4** I long to dwell in your tent forever
and take refuge in the shelter of your wings.
- 5** For you, God, have heard my vows;
you have given me the heritage of those who fear your name.
- 6** Increase the days of the king's life,
his years for many generations.
- 7** May he be enthroned in God's presence forever;
appoint your love and faithfulness to protect him.
- 8** Then I will ever sing in praise of your name
and fulfill my vows day after day.



Palm Sunday

Jesus Comes to Jerusalem as King

Mark 11 As they approached Jerusalem and came to Bethphage and Bethany at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two of his disciples, **2** saying to them, “Go to the village ahead of you, and just as you enter it, you will find a colt tied there, which no one has ever ridden. Untie it and bring it here. ³ If anyone asks you, ‘Why are you doing this?’ say, ‘The Lord needs it and will send it back here shortly.’”

4 They went and found a colt outside in the street, tied at a doorway. As they untied it, **5** some people standing there asked, “What are you doing, untying that colt?” **6** They answered as Jesus had told them to, and the people let them go. **7** When they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks over it, he sat on it. **8** Many people spread their cloaks on the road, while others spread branches they had cut in the fields. **9** Those who went ahead and those who followed shouted,

“Hosanna!

“Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!”

10 “Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David!”

“Hosanna in the highest heaven!”

11 Jesus entered Jerusalem and went into the temple courts. He looked around at everything, but since it was already late, he went out to Bethany with the Twelve.

Jesus Curses a Fig Tree and Clears the Temple Courts

12 The next day as they were leaving Bethany, Jesus was hungry. **13** Seeing in the distance a fig tree in leaf, he went to find out if it had any fruit. When he reached it, he found nothing but leaves, because it was not the season for figs. **14** Then he said to the tree, “May no one ever eat fruit from you again.” And his disciples heard him say it.

15 On reaching Jerusalem, Jesus entered the temple courts and began driving out those who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves, **16** and would not allow anyone to carry merchandise through the temple courts. **17** And as he taught them, he said, “Is it not written: ‘My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations’? But you have made it ‘a den of robbers.’”

18 The chief priests and the teachers of the law heard this and began looking for a way to kill him, for they feared him, because the whole crowd was amazed at his teaching.

19 When evening came, Jesus and his disciples^[e] went out of the city.

20 In the morning, as they went along, they saw the fig tree withered from the roots. **21** Peter remembered and said to Jesus, “Rabbi, look! The fig tree you cursed has withered!”

²² “Have faith in God,” Jesus answered. ²³ “Truly I tell you, if anyone says to this mountain, ‘Go, throw yourself into the sea,’ and does not doubt in their heart but believes that what they say will happen, it will be done for them. ²⁴ Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours. ²⁵ And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive them, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins.”



The right costume

David fastened on his sword over the tunic and tried walking around, because he was not used to them. But he said to Saul « I cannot go in these because I am not used to them ». So he took them off. 1Sam 17 :39

David was a surprising and contrasting character. He was both a handsome young man, we could even say delicate, a musician, a poet, a dreamer... But he was also a formidable warrior, fearless in front of the bear and the lion that he killed with his bare hands. When he saw Goliath insulting the army of Israel, his blood boiled. The zeal that animated him transcended him to the point of forgetting the danger. For him there was no doubt, with God he was going to defeat this formidable giant.

Saul, the war professional, was careful not to respond to Goliath's challenge. He promised riches and glory to whoever got into a fight, but he stayed warm in his tent.

My thinking is this:

- Why do those in authority often insist that younger people, even if they are gifted, do things the way they would have done them?
- Why don't the "Sauls" let the "Davids" be what they are?
- Why do some stick unsuitable costumes on others?
- Finally, why not accept the difference?

David tried to do things according to the professional's advice, but he soon realized that it was not suitable for him. And I like this sentence: "He got rid of it."

It is not a question here of rebellion but of respect for the specificity of each. My beloveds, let us not extinguish the personality of those who do not resemble us. In the body of Christ, we too often try to bring each other into molds, synonymous with deprivation of freedom of expression. A David will be a rich blessing to the Church/Mission if he is not forced to wear Saul's armour.

Le bon costume

David ceignit l'épée de Saül par-dessus ses habits, et voulut marcher, car il n'avait pas encore essayé. Mais il dit à Saül : « Je ne puis pas marcher avec cette armure, je n'y suis pas accoutumé. ». Et il s'en débarrassa. 1 Samuel 17 :39

David était un personnage surprenant et contrasté. Il était à la fois un beau jeune homme, nous pourrions même dire délicat, musicien, poète, rêveur... Mais aussi un guerrier redoutable, sans peur devant l'ours et le lion qu'il tuait à mains nues. Quand il a vu Goliath insulter l'armée d'Israël, son sang n'a fait qu'un tour.

Le zèle qui l'animait le transcendait au point d'oublier le danger. Pour lui cela ne faisait aucun doute, avec Dieu il allait terrasser ce géant redoutable.

Saül, le professionnel de la guerre, s'était bien gardé de répondre au défi lancé par Goliath. Il promettait richesses et gloire à celui qui se lancerait dans la bagarre mais lui restait bien au chaud dans sa tente.

Ma réflexion est celle-ci :

- Pourquoi, bien souvent, ceux qui exercent l'autorité veulent-ils à tout prix que les plus jeunes, même s'ils sont doués, fassent les choses comme eux-mêmes les auraient faites ?
- Pourquoi les « Saül » ne laisse-t-il pas les « David » être ce qu'ils sont ?
- Pourquoi certains collent-ils des costumes inadaptés sur les autres ?
- Finalement, pourquoi ne pas accepter la différence ?

David a essayé de faire les choses d'après les conseils du professionnel, mais il s'est vite rendu compte que ce n'était pas adapté pour lui. Et j'aime cette phrase : « Il s'en débarrassa ».

Il n'est pas question ici de rébellion mais de respect envers la spécificité de chacun. Mes bien-aimés, n'éteignons pas la personnalité de ceux qui ne nous ressemblent pas. Dans le corps du Christ, on essaye trop souvent de faire entrer les uns et les autres dans des moules, synonymes de privation de liberté d'expression. Un David sera une riche bénédiction pour l'Église/ la Mission si on ne l'oblige pas à porter l'armure de Saül.

Je sais, ce texte est un peu allégorique mais le Seigneur devrait vous éclairer.

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



Psalm 107

¹ Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good;
his love endures forever.

² Let the redeemed of the LORD tell their story—
those he redeemed from the hand of the foe,
³ those he gathered from the lands,
from east and west, from north and south.

⁴ Some wandered in desert wastelands,
finding no way to a city where they could settle.

⁵ They were hungry and thirsty,
and their lives ebbed away.

⁶ Then they cried out to the LORD in their trouble,
and he delivered them from their distress.

⁷ He led them by a straight way
to a city where they could settle.

⁸ Let them give thanks to the LORD for his unfailing love
and his wonderful deeds for mankind,

⁹ for he satisfies the thirsty and fills the hungry with good things.

¹⁰ Some sat in darkness, in utter darkness,
prisoners suffering in iron chains,

¹¹ because they rebelled against God's commands
and despised the plans of the Most High.

¹² So he subjected them to bitter labor;
they stumbled, and there was no one to help.

¹³ Then they cried to the LORD in their trouble,
and he saved them from their distress.

¹⁴ He brought them out of darkness, the utter darkness,
and broke away their chains.

¹⁵ Let them give thanks to the LORD for his unfailing love
and his wonderful deeds for mankind,

¹⁶ for he breaks down gates of bronze
and cuts through bars of iron.

¹⁷ Some became fools through their rebellious ways
and suffered affliction because of their iniquities.

¹⁸ They loathed all food and drew near the gates of death.

¹⁹ Then they cried to the LORD in their trouble,
and he saved them from their distress.

²⁰ He sent out his word and healed them;
he rescued them from the grave.

²¹ Let them give thanks to the LORD for his unfailing love
and his wonderful deeds for mankind.

²² Let them sacrifice thank offerings
and tell of his works with songs of joy.

²³ Some went out on the sea in ships;
they were merchants on the mighty waters.
²⁴ They saw the works of the LORD,
his wonderful deeds in the deep.
²⁵ For he spoke and stirred up a tempest
that lifted high the waves.
²⁶ They mounted up to the heavens and went down to the depths;
in their peril their courage melted away.
²⁷ They reeled and staggered like drunkards;
they were at their wits' end.
²⁸ Then they cried out to the LORD in their trouble,
and he brought them out of their distress.
²⁹ He stilled the storm to a whisper;
the waves of the sea were hushed.
³⁰ They were glad when it grew calm,
and he guided them to their desired haven.
³¹ Let them give thanks to the LORD for his unfailing love
and his wonderful deeds for mankind.
³² Let them exalt him in the assembly of the people
and praise him in the council of the elders.

³³ He turned rivers into a desert,
flowing springs into thirsty ground,
³⁴ and fruitful land into a salt waste,
because of the wickedness of those who lived there.
³⁵ He turned the desert into pools of water
and the parched ground into flowing springs;
³⁶ there he brought the hungry to live,
and they founded a city where they could settle.
³⁷ They sowed fields and planted vineyards that yielded a fruitful harvest;
³⁸ he blessed them, and their numbers greatly increased,
and he did not let their herds diminish.

³⁹ Then their numbers decreased, and they were humbled
by oppression, calamity and sorrow;
⁴⁰ he who pours contempt on nobles
made them wander in a trackless waste.
⁴¹ But he lifted the needy out of their affliction
and increased their families like flocks.
⁴² The upright see and rejoice, but all the wicked shut their mouths.
⁴³ Let the one who is wise heed these things and ponder the loving deeds of the LORD.

You can listen it here with Daniel's music:



psalm 107 8 11
21.mp3

Daniel Donahaye - I am 85 years old and for the last year have been putting my poetry to music, having launched my first cd in June in support of the Australian Leprosy Mission. I am happily married having met my wife in Israel in 1957. I was born in France but grew up in England, where I spent most of my working life. We retired to live in Queensland in 1999. Our children and grandchildren are spread across the world, and so I would sum up by saying that I am a citizen of the world with a deep concern for my fellow human beings.



Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence?

Psalm 139:7-10

Nineteenth century poet Francis Thompson led a short and troubled life. Academically bright but physically frail, he failed to meet the expectations of a demanding father, and in his twenties ended up sleeping rough in London. After one of his poems was published in a magazine, its publishers found him and arranged for him to stay with a Christian community in a quiet rural area. It was there that his poetry flourished, and he wrote what was said to be his masterpiece, a long and complex work called, *"The Hound of Heaven"*

The concept at the foundation of that poem has stuck in my mind. The idea of the relentless pursuing of a 'Hound' doesn't sit easily with one's sense of God as the loving Shepherd, seeking the lost sheep rather than hunting it down! It raises the question for me -perhaps for you at times- "am I Jonah fleeing from God, or the lost sheep longing to be found?" Psalm 139 helps me to understand. Verse 7, like Thompson's poem, sounds as if I am trying to evade God, to escape him, *"Where can I go... Where can I flee..."*. That section of the Psalm reads like the breathless fear of a hunted man; but then it calms to a sense of safety in the arms of God: *"...your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast"* There is relief in being found, held, guided, -like the relief of a distressed and lost child being found and protected.

So it is with Thompson's poem, the heart-outpouring of one who disappointed earthly parents, who failed in terms of human achievement, was rejected from military service on health grounds. One who went from excelling at university to selling newspapers on the streets and sleeping under railway arches. His poem begins,

*"I fled him, down the nights and down the days;
I fled Him, down the arches of the years;
I fled Him, down the labyrinthine ways
Of my own mind; and in the midst of tears
I hid from Him....."*

As the poem unfolds there is a sense of one who, -whilst 'on the run' and feeling 'hunted', nevertheless wants and needs and longs to be 'caught', to be *found* by God, (*"I wait Thy love's uplifted stroke!"*) The fleeing human soul realises its need for all that only God can provide. So it is as if the hunted becomes the hunter, the sought becomes the seeker, -longing for all that only God can give.

The poem ends with the poet hearing from God. The 'Hound of Heaven' shows him that he is losing the fulfilments of life because he tried to 'lose' God from his life: *"Lo, all things fly thee, for thou fliest Me! Strange, piteous, futile thing!"* And finally, the 'Hound' -seen now more as a deliverer than a hunter- declares, *"I am He Whom thou seekest!"* The last line shows that the one who drives God from his or her life drives out what God's love alone can bring.

Like the psalmist and the poet, many of us and many of those we care for have, through suffering in one way and another, felt the need for the love of God, although it is from Him we might at times want to run away.

Psalm 139 is our story. May God bless you in your seeking, and in being sought... and found.

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



The Last Supper

Mark 14 12 On the first day of the Festival of Unleavened Bread, when it was customary to sacrifice the Passover lamb, Jesus' disciples asked him, "Where do you want us to go and make preparations for you to eat the Passover?"

13 So he sent two of his disciples, telling them, "Go into the city, and a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him. ¹⁴ Say to the owner of the house he enters, 'The Teacher asks: Where is my guest room, where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?' ¹⁵ He will show you a large room upstairs, furnished and ready. Make preparations for us there."

16 The disciples left, went into the city and found things just as Jesus had told them. So they prepared the Passover.

17 When evening came, Jesus arrived with the Twelve. **18** While they were reclining at the table eating, he said, "Truly I tell you, one of you will betray me—one who is eating with me."

19 They were saddened, and one by one they said to him, "Surely you don't mean me?"

²⁰ "It is one of the Twelve," he replied, "one who dips bread into the bowl with me. ²¹ The Son of Man will go just as it is written about him. But woe to that man who betrays the Son of Man! It would be better for him if he had not been born."

22 While they were eating, Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take it; this is my body."

23 Then he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, and they all drank from it.

²⁴ "This is my blood of the ^(c) covenant, which is poured out for many," he said to them. ²⁵ "Truly I tell you, I will not drink again from the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God."

26 When they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.



Isaiah 53

Who has believed our message
and to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?

² He grew up before him like a tender shoot,
and like a root out of dry ground.

He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him,
nothing in his appearance that we should desire him.

³ He was despised and rejected by mankind,
a man of suffering, and familiar with pain.
Like one from whom people hide their faces
he was despised, and we held him in low esteem.

⁴ Surely he took up our pain
and bore our suffering,
yet we considered him punished by God,
stricken by him, and afflicted.

⁵ But he was pierced for our transgressions,
he was crushed for our iniquities;
the punishment that brought us peace was on him,
and by his wounds we are healed.

⁶ We all, like sheep, have gone astray,
each of us has turned to our own way;
and the LORD has laid on him
the iniquity of us all.

⁷ He was oppressed and afflicted,
yet he did not open his mouth;
he was led like a lamb to the slaughter,
and as a sheep before its shearers is silent,
so he did not open his mouth.

⁸ By oppression^[a] and judgment he was taken away.
Yet who of his generation protested?
For he was cut off from the land of the living;
for the transgression of my people he was punished.

⁹ He was assigned a grave with the wicked,
and with the rich in his death,
though he had done no violence,
nor was any deceit in his mouth.

¹⁰ Yet it was the LORD's will to crush him and cause him to suffer,
and though the LORD makes his life an offering for sin,
he will see his offspring and prolong his days,
and the will of the LORD will prosper in his hand.

¹¹ After he has suffered,
he will see the light of life and be satisfied;
by his knowledge my righteous servant will justify many,

and he will bear their iniquities.

¹²Therefore I will give him a portion among the great,
and he will divide the spoils with the strong,
because he poured out his life unto death,
and was numbered with the transgressors.

For he bore the sin of many,
and made intercession for the transgressors.



The seven sayings of Jesus on the cross

Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.

Today shalt thou be with me in paradise. ...

Woman, behold, thy son! ...

My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? ...

I thirst. ...

It is finished. ...

Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit.



Easter

Matthew 28

After the Sabbath, at dawn on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb.

2 There was a violent earthquake, for an angel of the Lord came down from heaven and, going to the tomb, rolled back the stone and sat on it. **3** His appearance was like lightning, and his clothes were white as snow. **4** The guards were so afraid of him that they shook and became like dead men.

5 The angel said to the women, “Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. **6** He is not here; he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay. **7** Then go quickly and tell his disciples: ‘He has risen from the dead and is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him.’ Now I have told you.”

8 So the women hurried away from the tomb, afraid yet filled with joy, and ran to tell his disciples. **9** Suddenly Jesus met them. “Greetings,” he said. They came to him, clasped his feet and worshiped him. **10** Then Jesus said to them, “Do not be afraid. Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me.”

The Guards' Report

11 While the women were on their way, some of the guards went into the city and reported to the chief priests everything that had happened. **12** When the chief priests had met with the elders and devised a plan, they gave the soldiers a large sum of money, **13** telling them, “You are to say, ‘His disciples came during the night and stole him away while we were asleep.’ **14** If this report gets to the governor, we will satisfy him and keep you out of trouble.” **15** So the soldiers took the money and did as they were instructed. And this story has been widely circulated among the Jews to this very day.

The Great Commission

16 Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. **17** When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. **18** Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”



Jesus Appears to Mary Magdalene

John 20

11 Now Mary stood outside the tomb crying. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb **12** and saw two angels in white, seated where Jesus' body had been, one at the head and the other at the foot.

13 They asked her, "Woman, why are you crying?"

"They have taken my Lord away," she said, "and I don't know where they have put him." **14** At this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not realize that it was Jesus.

15 He asked her, "Woman, why are you crying? Who is it you are looking for?"

Thinking he was the gardener, she said, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will get him."

16 Jesus said to her, "Mary."

She turned toward him and cried out in Aramaic, "Rabboni!" (which means "Teacher").

17 Jesus said, "Do not hold on to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father. Go instead to my brothers and tell them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'"

18 Mary Magdalene went to the disciples with the news: "I have seen the Lord!" And she told them that he had said these things to her.

Jesus Appears to His Disciples

19 On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jewish leaders, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" **20** After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord.

21 Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." **22** And with that he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. ²³ If you forgive anyone's sins, their sins are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven."



Jesus Appears to Thomas

John 20

24 Now Thomas (also known as Didymus^[a]), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. **25** So the other disciples told him, “We have seen the Lord!”

But he said to them, “Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe.”

26 A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you!” **27** Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe.”

28 Thomas said to him, “My Lord and my God!”

29 Then Jesus told him, “Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.”

The Purpose of John’s Gospel

30 Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. **31** But these are written that you may believe^[a] that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.



Alive forevermore!

I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I have the keys of Hades and of Death.” Revelation 1:18, NKJV

So much happened at Calvary’s cross over two thousand years ago. Jesus Christ was mocked by soldiers, beaten, and nailed to the cross. It looked like it was over when they laid His body in the tomb. All of hell was rejoicing. They had finally defeated Him. But in the heavens, God didn’t panic. He didn’t say, “What happened? My plan failed.” The earthly court said Jesus was defeated, but the Judge of all the earth said, “Overruled.” Jesus came out of the grave on the third day and declared, “I am He who lives. I was dead, but I am alive forevermore.”

If God can overrule death and the forces of darkness, don’t you think He can overrule anything that’s holding you back. No matter what bondage or stronghold has held you captive, when you acknowledge Jesus as your personal Lord and Saviour, you receive His power that will set you free. Believe in Him, receive His life, and celebrate true, eternal victory!

Father, thank You for Jesus’ resurrection and triumph over the grave and all the forces of darkness. Thank You for overruling anything that would try to hold me back and keep me captive. I am believing and receiving Your life and victory that sets me free. In Jesus’ Name, Amen.



Dorothy Owen - Administration & Logistics Assistant, *On behalf of The Leprosy Mission Papua New-Guinea Team*



Ears

Isaiah 6:8-10

I've decided that I need bigger ears. Have you noticed how everything now is kept in place by your ears?! First, it's the glasses, then it's the mask if you're wearing one, then for me it's either a wig or a turban. All occasionally topped up with headphones. Now finally to add to it will be hearing aids! I went to Specsavers to get my ears tested (I know) and I do have a little deficit, mostly due to old age of course. It was recommended that I should wear hearing aids and they are the ones that go behind the ear. So, you see I could do with dumbo type ears now. Still, I shouldn't complain too much. Grasshoppers have their ears behind their knees, imagine the difficulties they have with masks and glasses.

One of the things about going deaf in old age is that it is frequencies that you lose. It's not that every sound is diminished, it is that some of the high and low tones you don't hear. That's why we try and guess what people have said because we are hearing something, but our hearing is selective. Mind you, some people would say that I have had selective hearing for many years.

It is amazing how we can only hear the things that we want to hear and refuse to take on board the things that we don't want to hear.

Jesus said, "he who has ears to hear let him hear". It is one of his difficult sayings I find, until you take on board our selective hearing. There are definitely bits in the Bible that we don't want to hear. With all the clamour about false news you not only have selective hearing but also selective talking. I am so stunned by the way we are more inclined to believe lies than the truth. We shouldn't be surprised though since Jesus talks about that quite a bit.

He is quoting from the prophet Isaiah who says that the reason people don't hear or see is because their hearts are calloused. There are none so deaf as though who, don't want to hear.

Lord, open my ears. Let me not have selective hearing. Tune me to hear your voice and walk in the truth.

June Nash - June is now retired. She worked for TLM as missionary, trainer and director.



Apply within

'Men wanted for hazardous journey. Low wages, bitter cold, long hours of complete darkness. Safe return doubtful. Honour and recognition in event of success.'

Legend has it that Ernest Shackleton placed this advert in preparation for his *Endurance* expedition – the Imperial Trans-Antarctic Expedition of 1914-1917. It's a great story, but sadly I must tell you that it is not true. The myth of the 'advert' resurfaced on 5th March 2022 with the discovery of the wreck in the Weddell Sea of the *Endurance* by the Cape Town based South African icebreaker, SA Agulhas II, under the command of captain Bhengu.

Lying at a depth of 3 000 metres, *Endurance* is in a remarkable state of preservation in the worm-free environs of the Antarctic Ocean. The photographs that have been released show her to be little changed after being submerged for 107 years, a testament to her robust Nordic construction – some say she was one of the sturdiest wooden ships ever to be built.

Shackleton had planned to lead the first trans-Antarctic crossing from the Weddell Sea via the South Pole to the Ross Sea, but on the 18th January 1915, the *Endurance* became ice-bound and for ten months, Shackleton and his party drifted with the ice.

On 21st November 1915, the *Endurance* sank and Shackleton and his men trekked with two lifeboats to Elephant Island, where, on 24th April 1916, Shackleton and five other men set out for South Georgia, some 800 miles away. They rowed and sailed across the most terrifying seas in the world, only to land on the wrong side of the island, forcing Shackleton and two other men to cross the mountains and glaciers on foot [a feat that was not matched in over 40 years] to the port of Stromness, where the help of a steam tug was enlisted to rescue his men – an operation which succeeded on 30th August 1916.

Shackleton's heroism has justly long been lauded as one of the most remarkable displays of heroism and leadership ever displayed. What makes the story all the more remarkable is that it was documented in exquisite detail by the photopaper Frank Hurley, whose numerous photographs of the expedition have been preserved, graphically illustrating the harrowing conditions which the expedition endured.

Looking at those photographs, it seems inconceivable that all 28 men could have survived, but they did, due largely due to Shackleton's gallantry.

'Of them which thou gavest me have I lost none.' John 18:9

The Lord has entrusted people and resources to each one of us. Take a moment to think about that this morning. As far as those people are concerned, you are their Shackleton. Shackleton's men knew he would

stop at nothing to rescue them and because of that, their devotion to him was unshakable. A tall order? Absolutely. But do you really want it any other way?

PS Regarding the advert above – yes, there are still some vacancies.

Peter Laubscher - Country Leader, Southern Africa. Peter and Elizabeth Laubscher have worked with the Leprosy Mission since 1981. They are blessed with three children. Peter cruises the waters of False Bay when he's not trying to polish scratches out of telescope mirrors.



Psalm 62

For the director of music. For Jeduthun. A psalm of David.

- 1** Truly my soul finds rest in God;
my salvation comes from him.
- 2** Truly he is my rock and my salvation;
he is my fortress, I will never be shaken.
- 3** How long will you assault me?
Would all of you throw me down—
this leaning wall, this tottering fence?
- 4** Surely they intend to topple me
from my lofty place;
they take delight in lies.
With their mouths they bless,
but in their hearts they curse.
- 5** Yes, my soul, find rest in God;
my hope comes from him.
- 6** Truly he is my rock and my salvation;
he is my fortress, I will not be shaken.
- 7** My salvation and my honor depend on God;
he is my mighty rock, my refuge.
- 8** Trust in him at all times, you people;
pour out your hearts to him,
for God is our refuge.
- 9** Surely the lowborn are but a breath,
the highborn are but a lie.
If weighed on a balance, they are nothing;
together they are only a breath.
- 10** Do not trust in extortion
or put vain hope in stolen goods;
though your riches increase,
do not set your heart on them.
- 11** One thing God has spoken,
two things I have heard:
“Power belongs to you, God,
and with you, Lord, is unfailing love”;
12 and, “You reward everyone
according to what they have done.”



Psalm 63

A psalm of David. When he was in the Desert of Judah.

1 You, God, are my God,
earnestly I seek you;
I thirst for you,
my whole being longs for you,
in a dry and parched land
where there is no water.

2 I have seen you in the sanctuary
and beheld your power and your glory.

3 Because your love is better than life,
my lips will glorify you.

4 I will praise you as long as I live,
and in your name I will lift up my hands.

5 I will be fully satisfied as with the richest of foods;
with singing lips my mouth will praise you.

6 On my bed I remember you;
I think of you through the watches of the night.

7 Because you are my help,
I sing in the shadow of your wings.

8 I cling to you;
your right hand upholds me.

9 Those who want to kill me will be destroyed;
they will go down to the depths of the earth.

10 They will be given over to the sword
and become food for jackals.

11 But the king will rejoice in God;
all who swear by God will glory in him,
while the mouths of liars will be silenced.



Have you considered God's Word to be medicine for your body and soul?

When you have a headache, especially one that is quite intense and incapacitating, we often take a paracetamol, perhaps two. We then wait for the pain to go away. We may even lie down and rest, while the medicine takes effect.

We know that paracetamol can help cure a headache. It has the power to do so. However, if you just keep the paracetamol in your pocket, on your desk or just near at hand, it does not help with your headache.

If you read up on all the components of the paracetamol and study how they get into the bloodstream and effect the pain receptors- this knowledge in itself will not help with the headache either.

You must ingest the paracetamol, allow it to enter into your system and only then will it take effect. It will gently alleviate the pain and restore wellness. The process is often assisted by rest, a walk in the fresh air, a time of pause.

The Bible- the Word of God is like that paracetamol. You may have one in your bookshelf, in the drawer by your bedside or carry it with you as an app on your phone. You may read it from cover to cover, and then read the innumerable treatises on it. This will tell you of the 'power' of the Word of God.

However, to experience this 'power' - this healing and life giving force, you must ingest it. You must allow it to flow into your heart and mind. It often helps to pause when you do this- to reflect, to pray and above all to believe. Then it will be to you healing, hope, rest, restoration and even reformation.

My child, pay attention to what I say. Listen carefully to my words. Don't lose sight of them. Let them penetrate deep into your heart, for they bring life to those who find them, and healing to their whole body. Proverbs 4:20-22

Adapted from a message by Late Rev. Dr. S.D.L Alagodi. After serving for several years as a presbyter in various churches of the CSI (Church of South India), Rev. Alagodi joined as the teaching faculty at the Serampore Theological College and University, Kolkata. It is in St. Olav's church in Serampore that he first used this analogy in one of his Sunday sermons. He often included such simple analogies in his sermons, combining them with deeper theological explanations as they made for good and impactful learning experiences.

Shared by his daughter, Sharon Alagodi.

Pierina Dsouza - Senior Officer for Impact, Learning and Policy. Pierina has been working at the TLM International Office London, since June 2019.



A pilgrim's testimony

I lift up my eyes to the mountains— where does my help come from? My help comes from the *LORD*, the Maker of heaven and earth. He will not let your foot slip— he who watches over you will not slumber; indeed, he who watches over Israel will neither slumber nor sleep. The *LORD* watches over you— the *LORD* is your shade at your right hand; the sun will not harm you by day, nor the moon by night.

The *LORD* will keep you from all harm— he will watch over your life; the *LORD* will watch over your coming and going both now and forevermore. Psalm 121

Until the age of 32, I made the pilgrimages of life on my own; I did what I thought was good; I solved the trials and tribulations sometimes well, and sometimes badly; I often found myself in a vulnerable situation and miserable.

I had to realize that being a pilgrim so far had almost taken my life into the valley of the shadow of death. I longed for help, but I didn't know where to look; I didn't know who or what could help.

One day I was invited to the church, where a lovely old uncle greeted me at the entrance: Blessing, peace! - He told. There has been no blessing or peace in my life so far. Understanding these two words, my throat tightened, my heart beat harder. This is exactly what I longed for, because my pilgrimage so far has led to bitterness; the accumulation of unresolved problems; unlovingness; and misery. The pastor's introductory word came to me from *Psalm 121* — the first verse that brought my life to life: "*My help is from the Lord who made heaven and earth.*" The picture came together, which seemed to have been falling apart. There is help for my ruined, crippled, shattered life. That is, "My help is from the Lord, who created the heavens and the earth." The Lord who lives, He alone has protection, security, salvation, because He is the Saviour. In Psalm 121, the pilgrim makes his way to Jerusalem. Tired, tormented during the multi-day journey. The road was unfamiliar to him, full of danger and fear, but he raised his eyes to the mountains that stood before him, to the unknown road, and the question, "where does my help come from?" erupted from his heart?

I had to see it for me too, I'm not in control of my life, I could only ruin it. But God, the gracious, has also shown me that I need help beyond man.

I asked myself this question, "where does my help come from?"? Who can help me?

The pilgrim's answer, his creed, is, "My help is from the Lord," in whom he trusts, and who does not fall asleep. The LORD, who gave his life, who has the keys of life and death, who is given all power in heaven and on earth, who does not let go of the hand of the pilgrim, who keeps him every day of his life, who does not allow his feet to shake, to stagger. The Lord who helps and saves. The Lord gives strength, peace, love, perseverance. He is the mighty, above all, glorious LORD who said I love you with eternal love, so he attracted me faithfully. He is the Most High God who sent His Beloved Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins to save us from damnation, the state of eternal death. The Lord who protects, who protects, who keeps from all danger. - Today, the creed of the pilgrim is also mine.

Let us flee to Him, He is surrounded by blessed grace, He turns to all with the mercy and love of Christ.



Bringing the good news –

An example of people affected by leprosy

2 Kings 7

To become actor in our lives

In the story reported in 2 Kings 7, the main characters are people affected by leprosy. The city is under siege, it is facing famine. Even though they have an incurable disease, even though they had to leave their families and live apart, outside the city, those affected by leprosy do not let themselves be dejected. They have nothing left to lose and decide to surrender to the Syrians. Their chance to stay alive is slim, but they grab it. From being passive, they become actors of what happens to them.

Don't get me wrong, I am not presenting a magic formula. I don't say that, in case you are in a difficult situation, you just have to act and difficulties will "fly away". Remember, they are 4 and encourage each other (in verse 3 it is written: they said to each other). If you are going through a difficult time, surround yourself with friends, people who can encourage you. Do not stay alone !

Recognising God in our lives

These men arrive in the camp of the Syrians and witness ... a miracle, which is an unexplainable fact to the human reason interpreted as a divine intervention. God makes the Syrians hear the sound of a great army with chariots and horses and they flee.

Am I aware of the miracles – God's interventions - in my life? I'm not necessarily talking about something great, it can be small things. God often manifests his presence subtly, for example through people. Let us recognise the signs of his presence. To do so, it helps to take time, to reflect. "Be still, and know that I am God" (Psalm 46:10). I invite you to recognise what God is doing in your life, and to let him do.

To announce the Good News

These men realise they have good news to share, what is it? These men affected by leprosy have found treasures (food, drink, gold, money, clothing). The Good News is the fulfillment of Elisha's prediction in verse 1 "Hear the word of the Lord. This is what the Lord says: About this time tomorrow, a seah of flour will sell for a shekel and two seahs of barley for a shekel at the gate of Samaria." The Good News is also, as we can read in verse 10, to announce the fact that the enemy fled: "We went into the Aramean camp and not a man was there – not a sound of anyone."

And for us, what is the Good News? The Good News is the fulfillment of God's promises in Jesus. The Good News is also Jesus overcoming our enemy Satan through his death and resurrection, setting us free from the bondage of sin. James 4:7-8: "Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Come near to God and he will come near to you. " To be delivered is not to no longer have problems (illness, suffering, fear, worry) but it is to receive from the Lord the grace to live each of these situations in his presence, glorifying him and being a living demonstration of the love of God which animates us. In Jesus Christ we have life and freedom. Jesus, the Good Shepherd, came that his sheep may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly (John 10.10 NKJV).

May we live the life granted to us by the Good Shepherd, a life of grace and freedom. And as these people affected by leprosy did, let's not keep the Good News to ourselves but share it around us!

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



How good is the God we adore

I am always interested to check out when hymns or worship songs were written. For me some of those I like best were written in the 18th or 19th century and they are so full of praise and of meaning. When I look more into the history of the hymns, the authors, or the period I am struck by how often these great words were penned during really dark times personally, for the church, or for the nation. However, one that I want to quote today was written for children and appeared in a Sunday School praise book. The words may have been written for children but they are so full of depth and meaning and resonate with some study I have been doing into the life of Abraham.

The hymn is:

*“How good is the God we adore! Our faithful, unchangeable friend:
His love is as great as His power and knows neither measure nor end.*

*For Christ is the first and the last; His Spirit will guide us safe home:
We’ll praise Him for all that is past and trust Him for all that’s to come.”*

There is so much to think about in these few lines – trust in God as Abraham did when he obeyed God’s instructions and proved the faithfulness of God. God’s great love, that so great love that we focus on as we work through Lent to Easter. Thinking of that great love, I am reminded of a children’s address I heard and the illustration of how great that love is and how it indeed knows neither measure nor end. Take a sheet of paper and write on it “God’s Love”, indeed imagine that it represents God’s Love. The sheet of paper has 4 corners. Cut off one corner and give that piece of God’s love to someone else. How many corners are left? – no not three but five. Repeat that with the other three of the original 4 corners. Now how many corners are left? – yes there are 8 left.

As you give some of God’s love to others, He more than compensates for that but giving us even more to give away.

I had been thinking about that and later in the day when I was reading an article in a magazine, I came across these words: “giving away pieces of my heart, just makes it bigger”.

So my question for you today is “As you prove God’s love for you in your activities today, how much of that love, and how much of your heart will you give away”. As I thought through this reflection I was reminded of the many, many occasions when I have seen the staff of TLM give of their heart and give God’s love to those who really need it just at that moment.

Be blessed as you give today and as you experience God replenishing, and more, all that you give.



Do the psalms have anything to say about the war in Ukraine? – Part 2

If only someone would get rid of Vladimir Putin. That would end the war in Ukraine.

It would be surprising if that thought has not crossed the minds of millions, including Christians, around the world over the last two weeks. Would getting rid of Putin, in reality, end the war in Ukraine, and is it appropriate for a Christian to have such thoughts anyway?

And so it was, my mind filled with images of desperate women and children fleeing from Ukraine, and the day after Russian bombs had destroyed a maternity ward in Mariupol, that I opened my Bible and read the Psalm for the day - Psalm 137 *'By the rivers of Babylon we sat down and wept when we remembered Zion ... How can we sing the songs of the Lord while in a foreign land?'*

The *'foreign land'* was Babylon, modern day Iraq. The Jews had been exiled there following the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple in 586 BC.

'Do not forget Jerusalem', the Psalmist urges the exiles. Despite the taunts of your *'tormentors'* and the cruelty of your *'captors,'* make the continued celebration of Jerusalem your *highest joy* (v 6c), a way of demonstrating to them the futility of their attempts to destroy your country and its culture.

'Remember, O Lord', the Psalmist continues, *'what the Edomites did on the day Jerusalem fell'* (v7a), how they cried out, *'tear down its foundations'* (v7b). Don't let them forget their complicity in the destruction of Jerusalem, the Psalmist urges God.

In fact, and despite all evidence to the contrary, mighty Babylon is *'doomed to destruction'* (v8a). Indeed, whoever mistreats Babylon in the same way as it has mistreated the exiles will be *'happy'* asserts the Psalmist (v8b) and then concludes with possibly the most contentious and horrifying verse in the Bible, that *'he who seizes (Babylon's) infants and dashes them against the rocks'* (v9) will be happy.

This is a terrifying application of the principle that the punishment should fit the crime, demonstrated by the well-attested practice in the ancient world of destroying the infants of a conquered people,¹ a recurrent OT image for what happens in war.²

It has been suggested that to urge like-for-like vengeance on the one hand, or to argue, on the other hand, that the blessing of such action is so abhorrent that it should not even be considered as part of the revelation of Scripture, both fail to appreciate the full sense of the Psalm.³

¹ ESV Study Bible, page 1,114

² Goldingay, *Commentary on the Psalms*, Vol 3, page 609

³ Brueggemann, *New Cambridge Bible Commentary on the Psalms*, page 575

Rather, the brutally honest cry for vengeance in the midst of immense loss is given over to the judge of all things (v7).⁴ It is an act of profound faith to entrust one's most precious hatreds to God knowing that it will be taken seriously.⁵

Dietrich Bonhoeffer commented that only people who have not sinned against their enemies can leave vengeance in God's hands.⁶ Whatever the desires in the hearts of those who read or say this psalm, their words leave it to God to decide whether to exercise compassion and mercy or vengeance and judgment.⁷

Would we be honest enough to commend these thoughts to Ukrainians at this time? Would they be courageous enough to accept them? And would we all be willing to accept the consequences - or is it already too late?

David Parry - David Parry was a member of the TLM England and Wales Board from 1990 to 2002 and its Chairman from 1995 to 2002, and a member of the TLM International Board from 2001 to 2013 and its Chairman from 2009 to 2013. He is currently enrolled on a Certificate in Theology course at St Albans Cathedral, England where he has been a Guide since 2009.

⁴ Bruggemann, page 576

⁵ Goldingay, page 612

⁶ Goldingay, page 613, quoting Bonhoeffer, *The Psalms*, page 21

⁷ Goldingay, page 614



Psalm 64

For the director of music. A psalm of David.

- 1** Hear me, my God, as I voice my complaint;
protect my life from the threat of the enemy.
- 2** Hide me from the conspiracy of the wicked,
from the plots of evildoers.
- 3** They sharpen their tongues like swords
and aim cruel words like deadly arrows.
- 4** They shoot from ambush at the innocent;
they shoot suddenly, without fear.
- 5** They encourage each other in evil plans,
they talk about hiding their snares;
they say, "Who will see it?"
- 6** They plot injustice and say,
"We have devised a perfect plan!"
Surely the human mind and heart are cunning.
- 7** But God will shoot them with his arrows;
they will suddenly be struck down.
- 8** He will turn their own tongues against them
and bring them to ruin;
all who see them will shake their heads in scorn.
- 9** All people will fear;
they will proclaim the works of God
and ponder what he has done.
- 10** The righteous will rejoice in the LORD
and take refuge in him;
all the upright in heart will glory in him!

Authors in ABC Order**Country****Textuarium in Canonic Order**

<i>Anne-Claude Jonah</i>	<i>27 April</i>	<i>Switzerland</i>		Gen 6,9	8 April
<i>Christine Osman</i>	<i>28 April</i>	<i>Scotland</i>		1 Sam 17,39	11 April
<i>Daniel Donahaye</i>	<i>12 April</i>	<i>Australia</i>		2 Kings 7	27 April
<i>David Beazley</i>	<i>13 April</i>	<i>UK</i>		Psalm 59	2 April
<i>David Parry</i>	<i>1 , 29 April</i>	<i>UK</i>		Psalm 60	3 April
<i>David, king of Israel</i>	<i>2, 3, 9, 23, 24, 30 April</i>	<i>Israel</i>		Psalm 61	9 April
<i>Dorothy Owen</i>	<i>20 April</i>	<i>Papua New-Guinea</i>		Psalm 62	23 April
<i>Élie Fofolo</i>	<i>11 April</i>	<i>DRCongo</i>		Psalm 63	24 April
<i>Éva Sári</i>	<i>26 April</i>	<i>Hungary</i>		Psalm 64	30 April
<i>Isaiah prophet</i>	<i>15 April</i>	<i>Israel</i>		Psalm 107	12 April
<i>Joel Costa Dos Santos</i>	<i>6 April</i>	<i>Timor Leste</i>		Psalm 121	1 and 26 April
<i>John evangelist</i>	<i>18, 19 April</i>	<i>Israel</i>		Psalm 137	29 April
<i>Joydeepa Darlong Dr</i>	<i>7 April</i>	<i>India</i>		Psalm 139, 7-10	13 April
<i>June Nash</i>	<i>21 April</i>	<i>UK</i>		Prov 4,20-22	25 April
<i>Mark evangelist</i>	<i>10, 14 April</i>	<i>Israel</i>		Eccles 4,4	7 April
<i>Matthew evangelist</i>	<i>17 April</i>	<i>Israel</i>		Isaiah 6,8-10	21 April
<i>Moussa Souleymane</i>	<i>5 April</i>	<i>Chad</i>		Isaiah 53	15 April
<i>Peter Laubscher</i>	<i>22 April</i>	<i>Southern Africa</i>		Matthew 11,5	6 April
<i>Pierina Dsouza</i>	<i>25 April</i>	<i>UK</i>		Matthew 28	17 April
<i>Raju PLN Dr</i>	<i>4 April</i>	<i>India</i>		Mark 11	10 April
<i>Rosemary Tootle</i>	<i>8 April</i>	<i>UK</i>		Mark 14	14 April
				John 1,9	4 April
				John 18,9	22 April
				John 20	18 and 19 April

The Bridge

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