



TLM Daily Devotions

July 2023





Intro to the month of July

Dear TLM Family Worldwide,

Either it is summer for many of us, or winter on the other end of the Globe - does not matter if we think on God's stable faithfulness. He is our Rock in all changing circumstances, instabilities of this world and sometimes the uncertainties of our own heart.

This set for July is again offering spiritual food for us. Thanks to each contributor, among them an especially warm welcome to the new ones - bless them!

May the Holy Spirit unite us all wherever we are and however we contribute to the cause of the Kingdom!

Blessings with love:

Marta



Psalm 2

¹ Why do the nations conspire
and the peoples plot in vain?

² The kings of the earth rise up
and the rulers band together
against the LORD and against his anointed, saying,

³ "Let us break their chains
and throw off their shackles."

⁴ The One enthroned in heaven laughs;
the Lord scoffs at them.

⁵ He rebukes them in his anger
and terrifies them in his wrath, saying,

⁶ "I have installed my king
on Zion, my holy mountain."

⁷ I will proclaim the LORD's decree:

He said to me, "You are my son;
today I have become your father.

⁸ Ask me,
and I will make the nations your inheritance,
the ends of the earth your possession.

⁹ You will break them with a rod of iron;
you will dash them to pieces like pottery."

¹⁰ Therefore, you kings, be wise;
be warned, you rulers of the earth.

¹¹ Serve the LORD with fear
and celebrate his rule with trembling.

¹² Kiss his son, or he will be angry
and your way will lead to your destruction,
for his wrath can flare up in a moment.
Blessed are all who take refuge in him.



Psalm 3

A psalm of David. When he fled from his son Absalom.

¹ LORD, how many are my foes!
How many rise up against me!

² Many are saying of me,
“God will not deliver him.”

³ But you, LORD, are a shield around me,
my glory, the One who lifts my head high.

⁴ I call out to the LORD,
and he answers me from his holy mountain.

⁵ I lie down and sleep;
I wake again, because the LORD sustains me.

⁶ I will not fear though tens of thousands
assail me on every side.

⁷ Arise, LORD!

Deliver me, my God!

Strike all my enemies on the jaw;
break the teeth of the wicked.

⁸ From the LORD comes deliverance.
May your blessing be on your people.



Be Courageous

The prophet Jeremiah says in chapter 1 verses 17-19: *“Get yourself ready! Stand up and say to them whatever I command you. Do not be terrified by them, or I will terrify you before them. Today I have made you a fortified city, an iron pillar and a bronze wall to stand against the whole land – against the kings of Judah, its officials, its priests and the people of the land. They will fight against you but will not overcome you, for I am with you and will rescue you” declares the Lord.*

I don't think many of us will need a fortified city, or an iron pillar, or a bronze wall to deal with whatever we face today. Jeremiah had a hard time when he confronted the complacent and called out the conceited. God promises him He is with him and will rescue him.

In Acts chapter 23 we read of Paul before the court of the Sanhedrin and as he stood up to them, the situation became very heated and the troops had to step in and take Paul away to the barracks. God spoke clearly to Paul and told him that he would testify not only in Jerusalem but also in Rome and urged Paul to be courageous. God encourages Paul in the dangerous and difficult circumstances in which he finds himself.

Two very different people, two very different times, two very different situations but God offers the strength, the courage to deal with them with a boldness given only by Him.

How nervous are you when someone calls you to account for your faith? We are called always to give a reason for the hope we have, and that seems to imply that we should give the matter some thought and expect to speak about it on a regular basis. Whatever intellectual or emotional hostility to Christian faith we face we should be prepared to give reasoned arguments for why it is good and true (1Peter 3:14-16). On the other hand, Jesus told His disciples to expect persecution, and in those circumstances not to prepare a speech, but simply wait for the words to be given to us (Mark 13:11).

Why should we be nervous when someone asks us to account for our faith? I am sure that happens to us all, but I know that is the moment to just quickly and quietly ask God for courage to overcome our nerves, and for His words to take over our thoughts and speech. If we were not nervous, we would be tempted to speak in our own strength and using our own words not God's.

As I read the personal testimonies of many of you as you recount them to the Bridge, I give thanks to God for each one of you and your faith in Him. For those of you, who like me, are older and have had many personal stories over the years I have a question. Have our stories become tired over time, or are they too full of cliché? We need to be sure that our testimony reflects that it is indeed “new every morning”. Each day brings us a new story of faith in God and of the faithfulness of God.

As you move into this day:

- Thank God for the story you have to tell of His grace towards you;
- Ask God to go with you into the day with His strength and the courage to tell your story of faith with boldness;

- Ask God, as you move into and walk through the day with Him, to give you a new story – a “today” story.
- Remember that whatever your story is, when you tell it do it so that God will be glorified, not you.

“Be bold, be strong, for the Lord your God is with you”.

Christine Osman – Scotland - formerly Treasurer of The Leprosy Mission International



Mini me - imitator

Scripture Readings; *You became imitators of us and of the Lord, for you welcomed the message in the midst of severe suffering with the joy given by the Holy Spirit. 1 Thessalonians 1:6*

“Therefore, be imitators of God, as beloved children. And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God” (Ephesians 5:1-2, ESV).

Personal Experience My three-year-old grand-daughter is full of life and joy. Every time she runs into me, she shouts, “Nana, Nana, my ‘mini me’!” She is thrilled as she shouts the good news. No one can miss it. I have often suggested that she might be my “mini me” (since she is a lot like me), but she insists that I am her “mini me.” We both share mannerisms and a flare for lighting up the place, and we both tend to be optimistic. We have serious mini discussions about life, giggle about nothing, and enjoy each other’s company. Now when am around her I need to be very careful what I say or do because she is learning all kinds of new words and emotions and how to handle them. It’s her parent’s job and mine to guide her on what kind of words and behavior honors and glorifies God. When she sins and disobeys, we lovingly correct and teach her how we must go to the Lord in repentance, asking Him to help us when we are tempted to sin or disobey. We also help her to understand this better when we live this out and model it for her. Children naturally imitate who they are around the most. The environment they grow up in truly shapes them as a person so It’s important that, as believers, we are continually pointing them to Christ, His Word, and His ways.

Spiritual Experience Paul commends the church at Thessalonica that they have stayed strong in faith by following his example and that of other leaders—and ultimately by following Jesus, despite the hardship and suffering in their life. They have set an example of how to serve and live by the Spirit with joy. They have learned to access all the empowerment and energy they needed in order to live through the Spirit.

One of the best ways we can imitate God is to continually love others sacrificially like Christ. This way of living is an offering to the Lord as we learn to lay our life down for others and prefer them above ourselves. But just as the little ones need to be modelled godly behaviours, we need to surround ourselves with others who walk as those who are Christ-exalting and Christ-honouring in all they say and do.

Intersecting of Faith and Life We are called to imitate Christ, so it’s important that we look to those who have gone before us as we look to the scriptures and heed the instructions of the prophets and apostles and Christ Himself. We also look to the leaders, managers and mentors the Lord has placed in our life. We can learn so much from the Apostle Paul in the scriptures. His existence was filled with suffering and pain, yet he faced it with joy and bold confidence in the Lord. We see through his life that we can trust that the Lord gives us the courage to say ‘no’ to comfort and ease and ‘yes’ to suffering for God’s glory. As Jesus’ disciples, we are called to follow Him. That was Paul’s mission in life – to imitate Christ. And it is what he and the rest of the apostles did and they literally gave their lives to preach to the world through their words and actions.

We may not ever get the honour to literally die for Jesus Christ because of our faith in Him, but by God's grace, we can imitate His selflessness every day.

When we look to the Scriptures and our godly leaders who also help us rightly understand God's Word and equip us to serve and minister, we can have the courage to lay our life down for the cause of Christ and proclaim His glorious gospel so that others may come to know Jesus and live for Him too. Christianity is not passive but active. It's a life of obedience to the King in and through our lives, all for God's glory. We rest in God's grace which fuels the Christian's exertion to serve the King. We must remember that we are not just saved from our sins; we are saved for a purpose and Kingdom mission. We are to run the race set before us and live a life motivated by glorifying Christ. Let's fix our eyes upon Christ, abiding in His Word, and link arms with those He has placed in our lives as we learn how-to walk-in Christlikeness together.

Whoever we are, on in any given day we are following someone or leading someone. Our challenge is to follow those who imitate Jesus and to lead those who need to know him.

Further Reading: *Philippians 2:3-8* *1 Peter 2:21-22*

Prayer: *Lord God Almighty Please help us to imitate Jesus our Lord. May we live by the joy you have given us. May we be empowered by your Holy Spirit. May someone see you in us today in Jesus wonderful. Amen.*

Dorothy Owen – On behalf of TLM Papua New-Guinea PHACE Programmed Team



He exchanged His garments with us

“His tunic, which was seamless, of a single cloth from top to bottom” John 19.23

John recounts: “After having crucified Jesus, the soldiers took his clothes and divided them into four parts [...]. They also took his tunic, which was seamless, one piece from top to bottom. They said among themselves: let us not tear it, but let the lot designate whose it will be” (v.23-24).

Jewish mothers traditionally made these garments as gifts for their sons leaving home. Whether or not Mary actually made Jesus' robe, it was likely a prized possession. This is essential because throughout the Bible, clothing symbolizes behavior and personality. Peter suggests putting on humility (see 1 Pet 5.5).

Paul says, "All of you who have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ" (Ga 3:27). Like his robe, Jesus was whole, whole and perfect. The words "seamless, of one cloth" indicate that he was always directed by the mind of God. Jesus said, “The Son can do nothing by himself, but only what he sees the Father doing” (Jn 5:19). But when he was crucified, he put aside his seamless robe and “became a curse for us” (Ga 3:13). He put on the tunic of sin with our names on it. He died for sins he did not commit so that when we come to the cross we can walk away dressed in “the garments of salvation” (Isa 61:10). Not only does Jesus prepare a place for us in heaven, but he makes sure that we are well dressed for the occasion.

Il a échangé ses habits avec nous

« Sa tunique, qui était sans couture, d'un seul tissu depuis le haut jusqu'en bas » Jean 19.23

Jean raconte : « Les soldats, après avoir crucifié Jésus, prirent ses vêtements, et ils en firent quatre parts [...]. Ils prirent aussi sa tunique, qui était sans couture, d'un seul tissu depuis le haut jusqu'en bas. Ils dirent entre eux : ne la déchirons pas, mais que le sort désigne celui à qui elle sera » (v.23-24). Les mères juives fabriquaient traditionnellement ces vêtements comme cadeaux pour leurs fils qui quittaient la maison. Que Marie ait ou non réellement fabriqué la robe de Jésus, il s'agissait probablement d'un bien précieux. C'est essentiel car dans toute la Bible, les vêtements symbolisent le comportement et la personnalité. Pierre suggère de se revêtir d'humilité (voir 1P 5.5).

Paul dit : « Vous tous, qui avez été baptisés en Christ, vous avez revêtu Christ » (Ga 3.27). Comme sa robe, Jésus était entier, intègre et parfait. Les mots « sans couture, d'un seul tissu » indiquent qu'il a toujours été dirigé par la pensée de Dieu. Jésus a dit : « le Fils ne peut rien faire par lui-même, mais seulement ce qu'il voit faire au Père » (Jn 5.19). Mais au moment de sa crucifixion, il a mis de côté sa robe sans couture, et il est « devenu malédiction pour nous » (Ga 3.13). Il a revêtu la tunique du péché où figuraient nos noms. Il est mort pour des péchés qu'il n'a pas commis afin que nous puissions, en venant à la croix, repartir parés « des

vêtements du salut » (Esa 61.10). Non seulement Jésus nous prépare une place au ciel, mais il fait en sorte que nous soyons bien habillés pour l'occasion.

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



Prayer

Ask, and you will receive. Search, and you will find. Knock, and the door will be opened for you. Everyone who asks will receive. Everyone who searches will find. And the door will be opened for everyone who knocks. (Matthew 7:7-8, CEV)

We have a strong tendency to think that we must help God in some sense to answer our prayers. We may not put it quite like that, but we think more or less like this: My God, this is what I ask of you. I know how difficult it is. But if you approach the problem in this particular way, you should succeed.

The Spirit of supplication wants to teach us that we do not need think about how easy or difficult it is for God to answer our prayer. What we think or do not think about that has no effect on the outcome of our prayer. On the contrary, it is even counterproductive. It hinders us in our prayer life because we waste precious energy on something that is not our problem at all. God never asked of us that we should even consider that question.

Thank God for the wonderful gift of prayer. As we devote ourselves to serving him, we may ask for anything and everything we need. Through our prayers we get to know our heavenly Father better and better and we grow closer to him. We do not know *how* God will answer our prayers. Yet we may confidently ask him to bring his salvation through Jesus Christ to the people around us.

These thoughts come from Ole Hallesby, a Norwegian Lutheran theologian, from his book entitled *Prayer* published in 1931. I read a Dutch translation, then revised the text to be more tuned to modern ears, then translated into English and added a prayer item and a Bible verse. So it is not literally what he wrote, but it does faithfully reflect what Hallesby wanted us to understand.

Johan Velema is an epidemiologist and a theologian. He worked with TLM International from 1999 to 2011.



Contagious courtesy

Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honour one another above yourselves. Romans 12:9 - 10

When we came back home from London to live in Nottingham again we found local drivers were pretty courteous. Most of them anyway. You find that hard to believe? Not if you've driven in London. Here in Nottingham, if we're in a side road waiting for a gap in the traffic, within a few seconds someone will slow down and let us in.

I soon began to do the same, but there's a slight problem. When I let someone in, at the next intersection the person I've let in tends to do the same for someone else. And then that driver repeats the process. And I'm three cars down, not one.

Courtesy can be contagious. My good deed for the day - and a pretty small one too - encourages others to do the same. And although it's not earth-shattering and won't change the world by next Thursday, it does make a difference.

I must add a footnote though. As I was driving along thinking about this, an elderly gentleman in a flat cap and a small Fiat drove out in front of me, slowly and deliberately, without any warning or signal. I only just avoided driving up his exhaust pipe. And he never knew. Life can be irritating.

Lord, give me patience. We're not all perfect yet. Not even me.

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



Psalm 4

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

- ¹ Answer me when I call to you,
my righteous God.
Give me relief from my distress;
have mercy on me and hear my prayer.
- ² How long will you people turn my glory into shame?
How long will you love delusions and seek false gods?
- ³ Know that the LORD has set apart his faithful servant for himself;
the LORD hears when I call to him.
- ⁴ Tremble and do not sin;
when you are on your beds,
search your hearts and be silent.
- ⁵ Offer the sacrifices of the righteous
and trust in the LORD.
- ⁶ Many, LORD, are asking, “Who will bring us prosperity?”
Let the light of your face shine on us.
- ⁷ Fill my heart with joy
when their grain and new wine abound.
- ⁸ In peace I will lie down and sleep,
for you alone, LORD,
make me dwell in safety.



Psalm 5

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

- ¹ Listen to my words, LORD,
consider my lament.
- ² Hear my cry for help,
my King and my God,
for to you I pray.
- ³ In the morning, LORD, you hear my voice;
in the morning I lay my requests before you
and wait expectantly.
- ⁴ For you are not a God who is pleased with wickedness;
with you, evil people are not welcome.
- ⁵ The arrogant cannot stand
in your presence.
You hate all who do wrong;
- ⁶ you destroy those who tell lies.
The bloodthirsty and deceitful
you, LORD, detest.
- ⁷ But I, by your great love,
can come into your house;
in reverence I bow down
toward your holy temple.
- ⁸ Lead me, LORD, in your righteousness
because of my enemies—
make your way straight before me.
- ⁹ Not a word from their mouth can be trusted;
their heart is filled with malice.
Their throat is an open grave;
with their tongues they tell lies.
- ¹⁰ Declare them guilty, O God!
Let their intrigues be their downfall.
Banish them for their many sins,
for they have rebelled against you.
- ¹¹ But let all who take refuge in you be glad;
let them ever sing for joy.
Spread your protection over them,
that those who love your name may rejoice in you.
- ¹² Surely, LORD, you bless the righteous;
you surround them with your favor as with a shield.



God is not unjust

Hebrews: 6:10 "For God is not unjust, that he forgets your work and your love which you show toward his name by your service to the saints, which you still do today".

I am Eka Franxis Martins Fatima Braz and have been working with MLTL since 05/11/2009 until now. I started working at MLTL as a driver, and then was given responsibility as a field facilitator for 12 years (2011-2022) at the CBR Project and now I have returned to my previous position.

I gained a lot of experience while working at TLM Timor Leste, many things I learned: being able to know what disability and leprosy are; starting from the signs and risks; seeing the condition of the leprosy sufferers; how they live their own lives in their respective communities; the way people around them discriminate against them and discriminate themselves.

I was facilitator to self-help groups teaching them about saving, marketing, group management, and there is much more that we provide so that groups can survive and be empowered for their sustainable future. We use many ways to change their mind set not to complain about their situation but to be more positive about development and make them an example for other communities. In this position I was assigned to different districts and met different communities and different characters, and I had to adapt to the differences that existed.

"Sometimes I ask myself, 'why do I have to keep working like this? Why must I go to different districts, different communities and remote areas, working without knowing for how long, and yet I still want to serve and be placed anywhere and in any position."

I pondered it while opening the Bible and found a verse from Hebrews 6:10 *"God is not unjust, He will not forget your work and the love you have shown Him as you have helped His people and continue to help them."*

That made me feel very "Valuable."

All of this taught me to be useful to others even when I think I am not doing much.

Thank you



‘Do not let your hearts be troubled.’

‘Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me. ² My Father’s house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? ³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. John 14¹⁻³

Some moments in life get seared into your memory. Welded there, never to budge.

Two such moments despite happening almost 40 years apart are bonded together in my memory.

At five I went to boarding school 600 miles from where I had spent most of my young life. From life on a farm, where I ran free, to the restrictions and regimentation of a boarding school. I left a mission compound where I knew everyone, and everyone knew me.

It took 3 days to get to the school, staying overnight in Dak bungalows¹. I loved the journey and was so completely absorbed in the travel that I had no time to dwell on the reality of what lay ahead. My parents left me at boarding school, with my older brother and sister, who were seasoned boarders, but the way the school was structured meant I hardly saw them.

I have never felt so bewildered, hurt, distraught and alone as when they left to go back home, leaving me in this strange place of rules and constraints and strangers.

Fast forward 40 years and my son aged 4 and a half is about to start at Primary School. We are standing in the playground along with all the other parents, each waiting for our child’s name to be called. And then, they are lined up ready to go into class. Into a place where we, at that time, could not follow.

That’s when the emotions and feelings of long-ago surfaced; except now I’m feeling them as a parent. The pain and anxiety of leaving this child, we have nurtured, and walking away. Leaving him with people I don’t know. Of whose character and temperament, I know nothing. Will they look after him? Will they understand him? What are we doing leaving him?

So, I understand how the disciples felt in this passage. I empathise with their confusion and puzzlement. I feel their fear, anxiety and uncertainty. But I also hear Jesus’ words of comfort and assurance. His patient reminder of who he truly is. His promise of the Holy Spirit to companion them.

And wonderfully his promise to come back and take them to be eternally with him. His words were not exclusively for the twelve but for every disciple since.

What does Jesus ask in return? He calls us, as he called them, to love him, trust him and obey him. And he speaks to the disciples as one who would soon know and to us as one who does know the awful pain of separation, loneliness and abandonment.

John Twynam – Perkins - Formerly chair of TLM Scotland

¹Government rest-houses for travellers. Available to rent by the night.



The Pertinence of Prayer

As I was reflecting on the pertinence or significance of prayer in today's chaos ridden world I was reminded of the psalmist and great King David.

The psalms are full of his walk and talk with the Lord in prayer. He cries out, submits, agonises, praise and exalts God in his psalms and most of them are prayers.

King David was a great warrior and he knew about battles, war horses, ammunition and battle plans. Yet in Psalm 20:7 he says '*Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the LORD our God.*' A man of such military prowess, valour and strength would 'lay his sources of battle down' to say I will trust in the name of the Lord!!

This kind of deep, unwavering trust can come only with much communication with God - that is prayer. Being in constant communion with God allows a person with a closeness that can only be experienced by 'being one with Him'.

In Psalm 138 he praises the Lord with utmost devotion '*I will praise you, Lord, with all my heart; before the "gods" I will sing your praise I will bow down toward your holy temple and will praise your name for your unfailing love and your faithfulness*'

And in verse 3 '*When I called, you answered me; you greatly emboldened me.*' He talks of calling unto the Lord and the Lord answered him making his heart strong.

King David has set wonderful guidelines for prayer.

Another great person in today's world who comes to mind and this story will encourage many mothers is Joanna Wesley the mother of John and Charles Wesley. She had a hard life, married to a preacher with low income, they had 10 children and lived in a single room in a house. Joanna looked after all the needs of the young children while her husband was away often on preaching assignments.

She milked the cow, tended to the garden, cooked and cleaned and looked after all the children. Life wasn't easy and it was full.

Yet Joanna managed to find two hours to pray every day to the Lord. She never lost faith in God in spite of her circumstances. In fact it only made her stronger.

Joanna wanted a quiet time with God to pray but with the busyness of a full household in a single room it was a challenge! This is what the children remember of her - Joanna would choose a corner of the room, throw her long apron over her head and sit in prayer with her Lord! Her children knew that once mother was sitting with the apron over her head she was in communion with God and could not be disturbed! Even the toddler knew better to go close to her.

Such was her relentless faith in her God!! She prayed long and hard over her children and over the parish. God raised two of her children to spread the word of God. John Wesley preached nearly to a million people and brought revival wherever he travelled. Charles Wesley wrote 9,000 hymns which are sung till today!

Scripture says '*Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, making the best use of the time, because the days are evil. Therefore, do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.*' *Ephesians 5:15-16*

The 3 biggest spiritual benefits to a daily quiet time with God are that it draws us closer to Him, refreshes our soul, and it restores our joy.

If you want to grow your relationship with the Lord, study his word daily and intentionally.

Preethi Stalder is originally from South India. She is married to Francois Stalder and they have two adult children. She is a wife, mother, teacher and loves making friends for Jesus.

She is a third generation Christian growing up with grandparents as pastors and a family of missionaries in Southern India.

Preethi helps coordinate the Women's Fellowship group of the IBCB church called '*Connected in Christ*' in Budapest, Hungary.

She has also been a devotional speaker and coordinator of the Women's Ministry at the Evangelical Church of Bangkok, Bangkok.

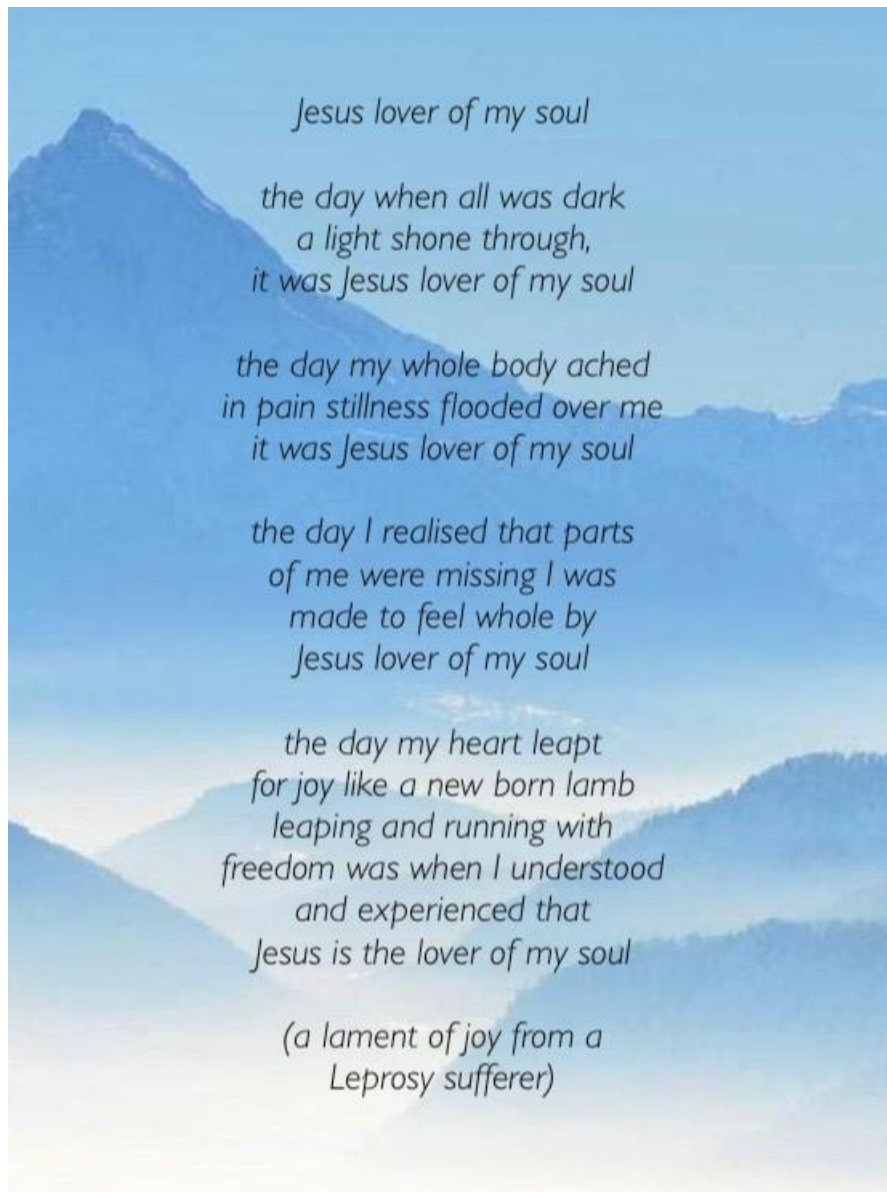
Preethi also works as a full time English teacher at an international school in Budapest.



Jesus, Lover of my Soul

Jeremiah 31:3 ESV

"I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore I have continued my faithfulness to you."



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 ALM and TLM. We have relocated to the UK to live with our children.



Weeds and Wonders

The LORD himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged. Deuteronomy 31:8 (NIV)

Our new house came with a brand-new garden, a square of lawn surrounded on three sides by fencing with the house on the fourth side. The builders had laid the turf and then downed tools. In the early days, it was a very low maintenance garden, since once the lawn had been given its weekly haircut there was nothing left to do!

Over the years we carved out flower beds, planted trees, added a shed and a shrubbery, a patio and a Wendy House, and slowly the square of grass became *our* garden. Creating a garden from scratch was fascinating and it gave us a tiny taste of how God must have felt at the dawn of creation. *“God saw all that he had made and it was very good.”* Genesis 1:31

The plants made themselves at home, put down roots and sent up shoots. The clematis climbed, the petunias trailed and there was always something to wonder at or admire. Everything in the garden was rosy. And then the weeds moved in and invited their friends! Those weeds blossomed and flourished, you couldn't fault their enthusiasm, but they were definitely gate-crashing the party.

We continue to fight a discouraging battle against ground-elder in the shrubbery, and dandelions and creeping thistles in the lawn. Where did they come from? Sometimes we're on top of the situation and sometimes the weeds have the upper hand. Life's a bit like that too, sometimes it's weedy and sometimes it's wonderful, but frequently a combination of both, rather like in the garden, where weeds and wonders grow side by side.

Trouble and stress come into our lives uninvited, just like weeds. No matter how much you prepare and plan, life is sometimes less than perfect, but God knows, and cares and he is with us in every circumstance, good and bad.

So, talk to God about the tough times and thank him for the good times – and remember the old gardener's advice: *When the going gets tough, the tough get growin'*. Gardening is splendid, stress-busting therapy.

Lord, it's good to know that you're close by in the good times and bad.

*Remind us to reach out for your hand when the going gets tough,
and to stay in touch when all's going well.*



Psalm 6

For the director of music. With stringed instruments. According to sheminith. A psalm of David.

- ¹ LORD, do not rebuke me in your anger
or discipline me in your wrath.
- ² Have mercy on me, LORD, for I am faint;
heal me, LORD, for my bones are in agony.
- ³ My soul is in deep anguish.
How long, LORD, how long?
- ⁴ Turn, LORD, and deliver me;
save me because of your unfailing love.
- ⁵ Among the dead no one proclaims your name.
Who praises you from the grave?
- ⁶ I am worn out from my groaning.
All night long I flood my bed with weeping
and drench my couch with tears.
- ⁷ My eyes grow weak with sorrow;
they fail because of all my foes.
- ⁸ Away from me, all you who do evil,
for the LORD has heard my weeping.
- ⁹ The LORD has heard my cry for mercy;
the LORD accepts my prayer.
- ¹⁰ All my enemies will be overwhelmed with shame and anguish;
they will turn back and suddenly be put to shame.



Psalm 7

A shiggaion of David, which he sang to the LORD concerning Cush, a Benjamite.

¹ LORD my God, I take refuge in you;
save and deliver me from all who pursue me,
² or they will tear me apart like a lion
and rip me to pieces with no one to rescue me.
³ LORD my God, if I have done this
and there is guilt on my hands—
⁴ if I have repaid my ally with evil
or without cause have robbed my foe—
⁵ then let my enemy pursue and overtake me;
let him trample my life to the ground
and make me sleep in the dust.
⁶ Arise, LORD, in your anger;
rise up against the rage of my enemies.
Awake, my God; decree justice.
⁷ Let the assembled peoples gather around you,
while you sit enthroned over them on high.
⁸ Let the LORD judge the peoples.
Vindicate me, LORD, according to my righteousness,
according to my integrity, O Most High.
⁹ Bring to an end the violence of the wicked
and make the righteous secure—
you, the righteous God
who probes minds and hearts.
¹⁰ My shield is God Most High,
who saves the upright in heart.
¹¹ God is a righteous judge,
a God who displays his wrath every day.
¹² If he does not relent,
he will sharpen his sword;
he will bend and string his bow.
¹³ He has prepared his deadly weapons;
he makes ready his flaming arrows.
¹⁴ Whoever is pregnant with evil
conceives trouble and gives birth to disillusionment.
¹⁵ Whoever digs a hole and scoops it out
falls into the pit they have made.
¹⁶ The trouble they cause recoils on them;
their violence comes down on their own heads.
¹⁷ I will give thanks to the LORD because of his righteousness;
I will sing the praises of the name of the LORD Most High.



When do we/the church need revival?

Read *Ezekiel 37:1-14* – HERE, GOD REVIVED A NATION OUT OF “DEAD BONES”!

Read *Matthew 25:1-13* – HERE, GOD KEPT HIS CHILDREN REVIVED UNTIL HE RETURNED!

We/the Church needs revival, when.....

1) WHEN THERE IS A SHORTAGE OF BROTHERLY LOVE!

This lack of cordiality, compassion, kindness between believers is so sad! (Cf. Psalm 133)

2) WHEN THERE IS A DEEP RIFT BETWEEN CONGREGANTS!

Feuds, factions and party spirits could end up splitting a local church! (Cf. Philp.4:1)

3) WHEN WICKED PEOPLE ARE RUNNING THE CHURCH!

In 1 Sam.4 we read of Samuel’s two wicked sons subverting God’s sacrificial system!

4) WHEN SINNERS ARE TOTALLY INDIFFERENT TO THE FACT THAT THEY’RE HELLBOUND!

Hell is a very real and terrifying place, for very real and worthy candidates! (Luke16:19ff)

5) WHEN BELIEVERS ARE EXTENSIVELY INVOLVED IN SCANDELOUS PRACTISES!

In 1 Cor.5 we read of a father committing adultery with his son’s wife! Read 1Cor.6:9-11.

6) WHEN THE CHURCH IS WORLDLY AND IN A BACK-SLIDDEN STATE!

Revelation 3:15-17 describes such a church, “...you are neither cold nor hot.

Would that you were either cold or hot! So, because you are lukewarm..... I will vomit you out of My mouth...you are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked.”

7) WHEN FOLK HARBOUR ALL KINDS OF MALICE AND BITTERNESS TOWARDS OTHERS!

Beware! Rom.12:21-“Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.”

Rom.13:8ff-“Owe no one anything, except to love each other...Love does no wrong to a neighbour...”

Rom.14:10-“Or you, why do you despise your brother? For we will all stand before the Judgement Seat of God.”

In CONCLUSION read and reflect on *Psalm 66:16-20*. - *Psalm 85:6*

“Will you not revive us again, that your people may rejoice in You.”-Amen!



The Light of the World

"Jesus ... said 'I am the light of the world ...' " John 8:12

"You are the light of the world" Matthew 5:14

The track meandered through the rolling hills of Southern Africa. The odd thornbush and termite "castle" punctuated the golden grass swaying gently in the breeze. Here and there outcrops of rocks stood out like giant mushrooms. The early morning sun bathed the countryside in a delicate light.

My vehicle stirred up a cloud of red dust that coated the sparse vegetation on the sides of the road. The sound of birds and crickets and the occasional gazelle leaping gracefully away from the car were reminders that I was not alone in the world.

Suddenly I was almost blinded by a bright light emanating from the grass. My curiosity was greater than the fear of snakes, so I stopped the car and walked in the direction of the light. To my surprise, I discovered an empty fruit tin.

There was no means of knowing if it had contained peaches, pears, fruit salad or jam As it had been stripped of all labels or paper, impossible to tell where or by what firm it had been manufactured.

Just an old, discarded, empty tin, but lying in such a way that it captured the sun's rays and transmitted the light with great effect.

Jesus said "let your light so shine ... " Matthew 5:16. Sometimes our culture, tradition, prejudice, egoism, wealth, education, lifestyle, denominationalism ... can make it difficult for us to reflect His light. We need to be emptied of self, stripped of labels and exposed to Him so that His light may shine through us.

Prayer: *Jesus, light of the world, shine in me and through me that I may reflect you in what I am and do.*

Thought: *What is there in my life that dulls His light or prevents it from shining through me? Do I love Him enough to deal with it?*

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



Forty days in the wilderness: could you survive?

On 1st May 2023, Lesly [13], Soleiny [9], Tien [5], and one-year-old Cristin Mucutuy, along with their mother, boarded a Cessna for a flight to Bogota in Colombia. Shortly after take-off, the plane disappeared.

The dense jungle made it hard to find the aircraft and a few days passed before it was discovered, crashed amongst the trees. The three adults on board were dead, but there was no sign of Lesly, Soleiny, Tien or Cristin. Where were they? Could they be alive? How long could such young children survive in the inhospitable jungle?

Soldiers and indigenous people began to search. Leaflets were dropped, helicopters hovered overhead, broadcasting a message of encouragement from the children's grandmother. Tantalizing clues were discovered, but as days became weeks, hopes of finding the children faded. Then, astonishingly, on 10th June, the army sent a message: "Miracle, miracle, miracle, miracle." All four children had been found alive. "Miracle" was repeated four times in honour of each child. For forty days, they had survived. Due largely to Lesly's courage and leadership, they had been kept safe and had managed to forage for food.

When they announce the 'Person of the Year' for 2023, I do hope that it will be Lesly's face that we see on the cover of Time. I cannot imagine a more deserving candidate.

Lesly had learnt survival skills by playing survival games with her family, who taught her to recognise good and bad fruits in the jungle. What diligent teachers they were; what an amazing pupil they had in Lesly! The Bible has numerous passages referring to the importance of handing down wisdom from one generation to the next:

"So even to old age and grey hairs, O God, do not forsake me, until I proclaim your might to another generation, your power to all those to come." Psalm 71.18

There are no prizes for guessing why I chose *this* verse.

What survival skills were handed down to you that have stood you in good stead? What survival skills do you wish that you'd learnt earlier? What skills are you handing down to the next generation – in your family, your place of work? In some cultures, such as the culture of Lesly and her family, there is a formal process for transferring wisdom. Most cultures were like this in the past, but increasingly, we have lost these processes and the handing down of beliefs and values has become haphazard. We may even find it difficult to define our culture, although we know immediately when a cultural boundary has been crossed.

Without these formal processes in place, we have to work all the harder to ensure that Godly wisdom is passed down to the next generation. What do you think should be done to ensure that the next generation does not suffer the fate described in Judges 2:10:

“And also all that generation were gathered unto their fathers, and there arose another generation after them who knew not the Lord nor yet the works which He had done for Israel.”

Think of one thing you can do this week to put your idea or ideas into action – the next generation needs you to act, and to do so quickly.

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.



How do I live a purpose filled joyful life?

Joy filled life is anchored in our personal relationship with Jesus and consequently what we do in our relationships with people. True joy in life is found in being immersed in 5 aspects of serving God.

Part 2 - Discipleship (being equipped and equipping others to be Christ like)

The word disciple translates as 'to become a learner or pupil'. The pupil learns from, emulates and grows into the likeness of the teacher. We are created by God to have the Spirit of Christ in us and to be like Him (Romans 8:29, 2 Corinthians 3:18). A disciple learns from the Word of God about Jesus Christ, personally experiences His grace, matures in His knowledge and obey God's Will. For a disciple, the Word of God is as much a necessity for his spirit as the food that nourishes the body. By God's grace, the disciple becomes more and more like Christ, living a life of faith and obedience.

In a wider sense, the word disciple connotes anyone who chooses to follow Christ whole heartedly. The disciple begins the journey after being born again with the Spirit of God. So, discipleship is relational, a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Jesus promised to teach us everything we need to know in this world through the Holy Spirit. Unless we have this teacher-pupil relationship with Jesus, everything else is futile. His wisdom gets transferred to us in discipleship.

Like the branch of the vine which continually draws its life giving/saving sap from the living vine, in faith we shall receive from Jesus His character and His will to do God's work (John 15:5). Discipleship is growing in faith and fellowship in Jesus Christ. The outcome is that the disciple's thoughts and behaviour are changed to consistently do what Jesus commands us to do. The walk of a self-proclaiming Christian without Christ is inevitably Christianity without true discipleship.

In discipleship, a disciple's (both) "inner" and "outer" worlds are actively engaged. It is an unending, intentional and willing participation of the believer in being transformed into the image/likeness of Christ. The mind has a key role to play in one becoming a disciple. What one thinks, one becomes (Proverbs 23:7). The heart manifests the thought process of the mind. From the contaminated ungodly world, the mind has to be extricated and elevated to the purity of Christ. To be right in what one does, one must first set right one's thinking about God through discipleship.

Jesus was a master teacher who used both theory and practical applications (parables) to teach His disciples the depths of wisdom in the Word of God. The disciple has to equip oneself with necessary skills as an apprentice of Jesus to teach others the riches of the God' Word. Jesus had commissioned Christians to make others His disciples (Matthew 28:19-20). Discipleship is the foundation of the body of Christ (Church) for its survival. Developing disciples is serving God. Disciples are the servants and stewards of God for the expansion of His kingdom in the hearts of people.

A disciple must be securely rooted in the facts of Christ's birth, death, resurrection and ascension. The disciple must believe that he is the redeemed child of God and that Christ dwells in him. He walks with the

empowerment of the Holy Spirit and lives a holy life witnessing for the glory of Christ. He exhibits Christ-like love for all, friend and foe alike (*John 13:34-35*). He meditates upon the Word of God. He prayerfully connects with God for strength, wisdom and guidance to live as a Christian.

Disciples are expected to make more disciples. The goal of discipleship is to develop believers who will walk by faith and profess their faith. Holistic discipleship involves discipling a believer in the Word, the relationship with Christ and the ministry of saving souls. Evangelism which is spreading the gospel by public preaching or personal witness must be grounded in Christian discipleship.

I am a disciple of Jesus Christ to disciple others.

In gratitude for His grace

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



The revealing imprint

As I walked along a river in Nepal, the guide drew my attention to footprints. "These are the still fresh footprints of a tiger that came to quench its thirst," he tells me. I did not see the tiger, but its marks left on the ground are proof that it is not far away!

In the Bible, at the very beginning, we read: "Then God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. God created man in His image."

Much later, the apostle Paul in his letter to the Hebrews (1:3) speaks in relation to Christ. *"He is the reflection of his glory and the imprint of his person, and he sustains all things with his mighty word."*

In fact, I have proof that God exists! I just have to look at you and I stand in front of his image. We are all his imprint! We often go far or look hard for the One who is already so nearby!

L'empreinte révélatrice !

Alors que je marchais au bord d'une rivière au Népal, le guide attire mon attention sur des empreintes. « Ce sont les empreintes encore toutes fraîches d'un tigre qui est venu se désaltérer, me dit-il. » Je n'ai pas vu le tigre, mais ses marques laissées sur le sol sont la preuve qu'il n'est pas loin !

Dans la Bible, au tout commencement, nous lisons ceci : « Puis Dieu dit : Faisons l'homme à notre image, selon notre ressemblance. Dieu créa l'homme à son image. »

Beaucoup plus tard, l'apôtre Paul dans sa lettre aux Hébreux (1 :3) parle ainsi par rapport au Christ. *« Il est le reflet de sa gloire et l'empreinte de sa personne, et il soutient toutes choses par sa parole puissante. »*

En fait, j'ai la preuve que Dieu existe ! Il me suffit de vous regarder et je me trouve devant son image. Nous sommes tous son empreinte ! Nous allons souvent chercher bien loin celui qui est tout proche !

Eric Chollet - I'm retired since four years. I used to work with TLM Switzerland for 32 years. During that time, I have had the privilege to stand in different committees (e.g. executive committee - directorate) with TLMI, which has been very rewarding. All along these years of service, I have met a lot of wonderful and dedicated people. May God continue to bless the mission for His glory.



Psalm 8

For the director of music. According to gittith. A psalm of David.

¹ LORD, our Lord,
how majestic is your name in all the earth!
You have set your glory
in the heavens.

² Through the praise of children and infants
you have established a stronghold against your enemies,
to silence the foe and the avenger.

³ When I consider your heavens,
the work of your fingers,
the moon and the stars,
which you have set in place,

⁴ what is mankind that you are mindful of them,
human beings that you care for them?

⁵ You have made them a little lower than the angels
and crowned them with glory and honor.

⁶ You made them rulers over the works of your hands;
you put everything under their feet:
⁷ all flocks and herds,
and the animals of the wild,
⁸ the birds in the sky,
and the fish in the sea,
all that swim the paths of the seas.

⁹ LORD, our Lord,
how majestic is your name in all the earth!



Psalm 9

For the director of music. To the tune of "The Death of the Son." A psalm of David.

- ¹ I will give thanks to you, LORD, with all my heart;
I will tell of all your wonderful deeds.
- ² I will be glad and rejoice in you;
I will sing the praises of your name, O Most High.
- ³ My enemies turn back;
they stumble and perish before you.
- ⁴ For you have upheld my right and my cause,
sitting enthroned as the righteous judge.
- ⁵ You have rebuked the nations and destroyed the wicked;
you have blotted out their name for ever and ever.
- ⁶ Endless ruin has overtaken my enemies,
you have uprooted their cities;
even the memory of them has perished.
- ⁷ The LORD reigns forever;
he has established his throne for judgment.
- ⁸ He rules the world in righteousness
and judges the peoples with equity.
- ⁹ The LORD is a refuge for the oppressed,
a stronghold in times of trouble.
- ¹⁰ Those who know your name trust in you,
for you, LORD, have never forsaken those who seek you.
- ¹¹ Sing the praises of the LORD, enthroned in Zion;
proclaim among the nations what he has done.
- ¹² For he who avenges blood remembers;
he does not ignore the cries of the afflicted.
- ¹³ LORD, see how my enemies persecute me!
Have mercy and lift me up from the gates of death,
¹⁴ that I may declare your praises
in the gates of Daughter Zion, and there rejoice in your salvation.
- ¹⁵ The nations have fallen into the pit they have dug;
their feet are caught in the net they have hidden.
- ¹⁶ The LORD is known by his acts of justice;
the wicked are ensnared by the work of their hands.
- ¹⁷ The wicked go down to the realm of the dead,
all the nations that forget God.
- ¹⁸ But God will never forget the needy;
the hope of the afflicted will never perish.
- ¹⁹ Arise, LORD, do not let mortals triumph;
let the nations be judged in your presence.
- ²⁰ Strike them with terror, LORD;
let the nations know they are only mortal.



The parables of the lost sheep and the lost coin – Part 1

Luke 15; 7

Luke 15 is famous for three parables: the parable of the lost sheep, the parable of the lost coin and parable of the lost son. Luke, probably more than any of the other Gospels, shows Christ love for the sinners. In Luke in particular, a sinner is usually seen as an object of sovereign grace.

There is a running through the Bible that God is for the underdogs. We all have experienced how we feel, when we notice everyone else excel while we struggle and lag behind. We know how we feel to be rejected by a parent, teacher, or a colleague. At the same time we know that Jesus knows where and how we are, how we feel. Such sad situations draw the attention of Jesus immediately. The more we are rejected, the more we receive the attention of Jesus. The more people look down on us, the more Jesus will look at us. This is a fact.

We will now focus here at two parables, the parable of lost sheep and the parable of the lost coin, because these two are virtually identical in meaning.

The meaning of the Two Parables:

1. The overwhelming message of these two parables is that *God loves sinners*. The lost sheep and the lost coin symbolize those who are helpless - being found is not something they can arrange for themselves.

We noticed that when the sheep are lost, God looks for them and does not give up until He finds them. What is the theology behind that? There are two kinds of "lost sheep" for which God looks. First of all, the doctrine of election and actual calling comes into play. This means that if a person "belongs" to God because He has predestined them to belong to Him, even though they may not have been converted yet, it is as if they are one of God's sheep already. There are those out in the world of whom God says, "They are mine, and I will call them in due time." St. Augustine said, "God loves every person as if there was no one else to love." God goes after those lost sheep as if no one else existed, until He finds them and gathers them in. The second type of lost sheep is the Christian who has fallen into sin, wandered from the fold and then is later brought home. This shows God's tenderness towards the backsliders.

Whether we apply the parable to the person not yet converted or to the concerted person who is brought back, a celebration is called for. When the newly converts are brought to repentance, all heavens rejoice, and when a backslider returns, again, all heaven rejoices.

The only slight difference between the two parables is that Jesus used the analogy of a sheep that wanders off in the first parable and a coin - an inanimate object-in the second. In either case, they are helpless and need to be found because they cannot do it themselves.

A Magnet for Sinner:

Luke 15 begins by saying that tax collectors and "sinners" were gathering around Jesus to hear what He had had to say. This clearly offended the self-righteous "religious" people who were also there. We learn that sinners are like sheep. God often refers to His people as sheep. There are many verses in the Bible which confirm this statement.

Best known of all perhaps is the following verse; "We all, like sheep have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all" (Isaiah 53:22).

Likewise God does not give up until He finds the one He is after - until He completes the number of the elect.

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 parables of the lost sheep and the lost coin – Part 2

Luke 15; 7

He finds us:

Jesus is always looking for sinners and backsliders, this is important because it is relevant to everyone - we are lost in many situations, and God sees our helplessness. If we are lost, God does not give up until He finds us, whether we happen to be His elect and hear His all to salvation, or whether we are a backslider. All of us have all been backsliders to some degree.

We Are Like Sheep:

The basic habit of a sheep is to wander and go astray. They always think the grass is greener on the other side of the fence. Sheep are known to be stubborn - they want their way. They cannot care for themselves like other animals. They have no thought of what is coming next. They have no thought of what is coming next - no thought of the future, just like sinners and backsliders.

The importance of Repentance:

These parables show the importance of repentance." I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than ninety- nine righteous persons who do not need to repent" (Luke 15:7). Jesus said this again in Luke 25: 10.

The one who searches:

The emphasis in these passages is not on the one who is lost only but on the one who is searching. The lost are Jesus' property.

Rejoicing and Restoration:

These teach us that heaven and the angles notice what is happening on the earth. What we can learn from these parables is that Jesus is saying those in heaven do know some of what is going on down here. Finding the sheep was caused by rejoicing in heaven, finding the coin brought rejoicing in the presence of the angles.

Practical problem:

Now we are very clear that God loves and takes care of sinners and backsliders. He makes every effort to bring them back to His kingdom and in the fellowship of His people. God does not keep records of their sins and wrong doings. He treats them equal to other Christians who have been faithful for a long time. This shows the greatness of God and His forgiveness.

But this is not happening in our churches and Christian communities. The senior, mature and long-served Christians do not forgive the other members of the congregation who had been involved in some misconduct, sins and bad behavior in their past. These matured Christians do not accept them as equal members of the Church congregation because of their past lifestyle. No senior Christian members want to greet these Christians after the church service, who has already been forgiven by God. They do not want to associate with them and do not want to do anything with them. They do not mix with such people and do not take any interest in their life and family. These are almost neglected by such senior Christian members of the Church.

God loved these Christians and had already forgiven them. God does not keep records of their past. He accepts them as His children but such mature and senior Church members do not accept them as equals. They still talk about and remember their past life style and wrong doings.

This situation could be very dangerous for these people if they do not receive love, respect and treated equally by the senior and mature Christian members of the Church. They may again backslide because not accepted by some of the Church members.

Let us prepare ourselves and learn from the example of Christ. Let us accept and treat these people of the rough past.

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



Leaders eat last (continued)

John 13:1-12 I was very much encouraged by Peter Laubscher's contribution on 23rd June focussing on servant leadership. Over the years I that was in senior leadership positions, I would keep my eye open for books which explore leadership from this perspective, and there are a few which have inspired and challenged me.

In fact, the very first book I read on leadership was a couple of years before joining TLM and is called ***Leadership is an Art*** by Max Dupree published by Doubleday in 1989. My personal copy is long gone, but the fact that I can remember the opening lines shows the impact it had on me. They run something like this: "The first job of the leader is to define reality; the last job is to thank the participants – and in between the leader is the servant of the organisation." The phrase "Define reality" might confuse some people, but he simply means to be realistic about where the strengths and weaknesses of the organisation lie and the environment it is in. But it was being the servant of the organisation that touched me.

I love the Graham Kendrick song The Servant King, and especially the lines:

*"So let us learn how to serve
And in our lives enthrone Him
Each other's needs to prefer
For it is Christ we're serving"*

This last line is taken from Paul's letter to the Colossians 3:24 and often haunts me when I feel the pressure.

Jesus taught many things in his parables, and he showed many acts of divine power through his miracles. But if he had only done those things he would have probably been long forgotten, or a curiosity consigned to books on ancient history. We follow him today because of what he did. We understand from passages like Philippians 2:6-8 that his mission in coming to share our lives was a mission of service and sacrifice right from the beginning.

We read how he spent his days helping others and getting so exhausted that he had to take time out to rest – and even take holiday breaks as in Mark 7:24-30 and 8:27 onwards. We read how he washed his disciples' feet in an extraordinary act of humiliation and servanthood. We read how he did not stray from his divine mission, but knowing all that lay ahead, went out into the Garden of Gethsemane and waited for some hours to be arrested – knowing that there would be only one outcome from this – the agony of the cross.

There is no better book than the Bible to find the best example of servant leadership. But if you're still curious, another book I have found helpful is ***Effective Strategic Leadership*** by John Adair published by Pan Books. I have given several copies away to others in leadership positions over the years – but somehow have still managed to hang on to my own personal copy.

Happy reading!

Trevor Durston - General Director from 1993-2006. Now retired and working as a volunteer speaker for TLM.



A different coronation of a different King

The 6th May King Charles III was crowned king in a well-prepared coronation service. In front of 2000 royal families, presidents and celebrities, and a whole world watching through TV and social media, the king received his beautiful crown as a sign of his royalty and dignity. The United Kingdom and the Commonwealth countries proclaimed "God save the King!". King Charles was crowned with the St Edward's Crown from the 17th century. The crown weighs nearly 5 pounds, and it has a solid gold frame and 444 stones: rubies, amethysts, sapphires, garnet, topazes and tourmalines.

In Sweden, the 15 September 1973, the Crown Prince Karl Gustav became King of Sweden at the age of 27. The enthronement ceremonies took place on 19 September. The King swore the King's Oath in the Cabinet Meeting Room at the Royal Palace. During his meeting with the Government, The King also announced his regnal name, his regnal title and his motto. The King then appeared before the Parliament, the diplomatic corps and official Sweden, for a ceremony in the Hall of State during which he gave a speech from Queen Kristina's silver throne.

We belong, not only to a country but also to the Kingdom of God. The Kingdom of God has also a king. He is called "*King of kings and Lord of lords*" (Rev. 19:16) and is above all other kings and rulers on earth. His name is Jesus Christ.

In the gospels, we can read about the teaching of Jesus about the kingdom of God. This kingdom is a very different kind of kingdom and he talked a lot about it in his teaching in the gospels. Jesus explained to Pilate: "*My kingdom is not of this world... But now my kingdom is from another place.*" (John 18:36) and "*because the kingdom of God is in within you.*" (Luke 17:21)

The coronation of King Jesus was also a very different coronation. The only crown given to Jesus was a crown of thorns. "They stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him, and then twisted together a crown of thorns and set it on his head. They put a staff in his right hand. Then they knelt in front of him and mocked him. "*Hail, king of the Jews!*" they said. *They spit on him, and took the staff and struck him on the head again and again.*" Matt 27:28-30

We remember how God in the Garden of Eden because of sin said to Adam: "Cursed is the ground because of you; It will produce thorns and thistles for you....." The consequences of sin, the curse and the thorns, were now on Jesus's head. When Jesus was crucified, he still had this crown of thorns on his head and a written charge placed on the cross: "*This is Jesus, the king of the Jews*". What a coronation!

However, what was seen as a coronation of disgrace, defeat and humiliation was in reality a coronation of victory, salvation, and glory:

"Jesus, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross! Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above

every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

Phil 2:6-11

In a prophetic psalm, it is written about Jesus: *“You came to greet him with rich blessings and placed a crown of pure gold on his head.”* Psalm 21:3

Now he wants to put a crown on each of us with blessings because of his divine coronation: *“Praise the LORD, my soul, and forget not all his benefits, who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases, who redeems your life from the pit and crowns you with love and compassion.”* Psalm 103:2-4

Jesus is really the King of kings and will remain King in the Kingdom of God forever!

Allan Ekstedt - Nordic Hub coordinator



The “Let-Us” diet! – Part 1

Let’s talk about going on diet!

- Have you ever felt the need to go on a diet? There are multiple reasons for dieting, you need to loose a few kilos, as a spiritual discipline or even to change an eating habit.
 - Namely slowing down & less activity because of age, disability or circumstances.
- That’s the physical aspect of life

What about our spiritual life?

- Have you got bored “doing” by doing the same routine every day?
- Have you listened to too many forwards from others, podcasts, prophetic words...
- Given your attention to different conspiracy theories?
- Have you lost a few spiritual kgs, put on unnecessary spiritual ideas?

The book of Hebrews has a “Let-us” diet!

Thought 1



“Let Us” Carefully enter and stay in the rest God has for us.

*Hebrews 4:1-3 “Therefore, since the promise of entering **His rest** still stands, **let us** be careful that none of you be found to have fallen short of it. For we also have had the good news proclaimed to us, just as they did; but the message they heard was of **no value** to them, because they did not share the **faith** of those who **obeyed**. Now we who have believed enter that rest, just as God has said, ‘So I declared on oath in my anger, “They shall never enter my rest.”’ And yet his works have been finished since the creation of the world.”*

God’s rest for us is entered and enjoyed by exercising **faith** and **obedience**.

In chapter 3 the writer shows us that Jesus Christ was more superior than the law Moses was given.

- The way that Moses was given was by works as instructed by God!
- The more superior way of Jesus is by **faith** in what He has done for us, not what we do to get the okay from heaven.
- So into chapter 4 the superior way, the way of faith produces a rest created for us by Our Heavenly Father.
 - Israel never moved into God’s rest with dire consequences.

Obedience has the opposite result

- We have heard and responded to the Good News, we’ve obeyed by resting in our Lord, we’ve mixed faith with our obedience and should be enjoying the entered rest God gives us!

Summary: On the “Let Us” diet 1:

Remember the steps:

1. Receive the good news
2. Respond to the promises of the good news
3. React in obedience
4. Relax in Our Heavenly Father’s rest!

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 ALM and TLM. We have relocated to the UK to live with our children.



Psalm 10

- ¹ Why, LORD, do you stand far off?
Why do you hide yourself in times of trouble?
- ² In his arrogance the wicked man hunts down the weak,
who are caught in the schemes he devises.
- ³ He boasts about the cravings of his heart;
he blesses the greedy and reviles the LORD.
- ⁴ In his pride the wicked man does not seek him;
in all his thoughts there is no room for God.
- ⁵ His ways are always prosperous;
your laws are rejected by him;
he sneers at all his enemies.
- ⁶ He says to himself, "Nothing will ever shake me."
He swears, "No one will ever do me harm."
- ⁷ His mouth is full of lies and threats;
trouble and evil are under his tongue.
- ⁸ He lies in wait near the villages;
from ambush he murders the innocent.
His eyes watch in secret for his victims;
- ⁹ like a lion in cover he lies in wait.
He lies in wait to catch the helpless;
he catches the helpless and drags them off in his net.
- ¹⁰ His victims are crushed, they collapse;
they fall under his strength.
- ¹¹ He says to himself, "God will never notice;
he covers his face and never sees."
- ¹² Arise, LORD! Lift up your hand, O God.
Do not forget the helpless.
- ¹³ Why does the wicked man revile God?
Why does he say to himself,
"He won't call me to account"?
- ¹⁴ But you, God, see the trouble of the afflicted;
you consider their grief and take it in hand.
The victims commit themselves to you;
you are the helper of the fatherless.
- ¹⁵ Break the arm of the wicked man;
call the evildoer to account for his wickedness
that would not otherwise be found out.
- ¹⁶ The LORD is King for ever and ever; the nations will perish from his land.
- ¹⁷ You, LORD, hear the desire of the afflicted;
you encourage them, and you listen to their cry,
- ¹⁸ defending the fatherless and the oppressed, so that mere earthly mortals
will never again strike terror.



Psalm 11

For the director of music. Of David.

¹ In the LORD I take refuge.
How then can you say to me:
“Flee like a bird to your mountain.
² For look, the wicked bend their bows;
they set their arrows against the strings
to shoot from the shadows
at the upright in heart.
³ When the foundations are being destroyed,
what can the righteous do?”
⁴ The LORD is in his holy temple;
the LORD is on his heavenly throne.
He observes everyone on earth;
his eyes examine them.
⁵ The LORD examines the righteous,
but the wicked, those who love violence,
he hates with a passion.
⁶ On the wicked he will rain
fiery coals and burning sulfur;
a scorching wind will be their lot.
⁷ For the LORD is righteous,
he loves justice;
the upright will see his face.



The “Let-Us” diet! – Part 2

Thought 2



“Let Us” maintain focus, which is an effort, and stay in God’s promised rest.

*Hebrews 4:9-12 NIVUK “There remains, then, a **Sabbath-rest** for the people of God; for anyone who enters God’s rest also rests from their works, just as God did from his. **Let us, therefore, make every effort to enter that rest**, so that no-one will perish by following their example of disobedience. 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.”*

Our focused thought is enter the rest that God has prepared and called us to enjoy.

Let us, therefore, make every effort to enter that rest,

Obedience to His Word, His instruction manual, the Bible so often is hard because our minds and lifestyles are easily distracted by the clamour of life around us.

- Someone has counted and found that the term “do not worry” is found in one of the many bible translations 365 times. One for each day of the year!
 - What wonderful news, what an incredible instruction to live by!
- Yet at times so elusive!

Why do we so often default to worry?



It takes obedience, faith and full trust in God’s Word to stay in His rest!

- Instead of falling back, defaulting to a state of unrest, worry, doubt and neglecting God’s promises run to His Word, hide it in your heart and mind.
- Until The Word becomes our default position for **everything** in life!

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.”

- Let The Word do spiritual surgery and remove doubts and fears from us!

Summary: On the “Let Us” diet 2:

Let us, therefore, make every effort to enter that rest, so that no-one will perish by following their example of disobedience.

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Authors in ABC Order

Country

Textuaries in Canonical Order

<i>Allan Ekstedt</i>	<i>27 July</i>	<i>Sweden</i>		Deut 31,8	<i>14 July</i>
<i>+ Eddie Askew</i>	<i>7 July</i>	<i>UK</i>		Psalm 2	<i>1 July</i>
<i>Christine Osman</i>	<i>3 July</i>	<i>Scotland</i>		Psalm 3	<i>2 July</i>
<i>Dan Izzett</i>	<i>13, 28, 31 July</i>	<i>Zimbabwe/UK</i>		Psalm 4	<i>8 July</i>
<i>David king of Israel</i>	<i>2, 8, 9, 15, 16, 22, 23, 30 July</i>	<i>Israel</i>		Psalm 5	<i>9 July</i>
<i>Dorothy Owen</i>	<i>4 July</i>	<i>Papua New-Guinea</i>		Psalm 6	<i>15 July</i>
<i>Eka Franxis</i>	<i>10 July</i>	<i>Timor Leste</i>		Psalm 7	<i>16 July</i>
<i>Élie Fofolo</i>	<i>5 July</i>	<i>DR Congo</i>		Psalm 8	<i>22 July</i>
<i>Eric Chollet</i>	<i>21 July</i>	<i>Switzerland</i>		Psalm 9	<i>23 July</i>
<i>Johan Velema Dr</i>	<i>6 July</i>	<i>Netherlands</i>		Psalm 10	<i>29 July</i>
<i>John Twynam-Perkins</i>	<i>11 July</i>	<i>Scotland</i>		Psalm 11	<i>30 July</i>
<i>Judith Merrell</i>	<i>14 July</i>	<i>UK</i>		Psalm 71,18	<i>19 July</i>
<i>Otto Kingsley</i>	<i>17 July</i>	<i>Southern Afrcia</i>		Psalm 138	<i>12 July</i>
<i>Peter Laubscher</i>	<i>19 July</i>	<i>Southern Africa</i>		Jeremiah 1,17-19	<i>3 July</i>
<i>Pradeep and Sarah Failbus</i>	<i>24, 25 July</i>	<i>India</i>		Jeremiah 31,3	<i>13 July</i>
<i>Preethi Stalder</i>	<i>12 July</i>	<i>India/Hungary</i>		Matthew 7,7-8	<i>6 July</i>
<i>Raju PLN Dr</i>	<i>20 July</i>	<i>India</i>		Matthew 25,1-13	<i>17 July</i>
<i>Silvano Perotti</i>	<i>18 July</i>	<i>Switzerland</i>		Luke 15,7	<i>24 and 25 July</i>
<i>Trevor Durston</i>	<i>26 July</i>	<i>UK</i>		Luke 17,21	<i>27 July</i>
				John 8,12	<i>18 July</i>
				John 13,1-12	<i>26 July</i>
				John 13, 34-35	<i>20 July</i>
				John 14, 1-3	<i>11 July</i>
				John 19,23	<i>5 July</i>
				Romans 12,9-10	<i>7 July</i>

			1 Thess 1,6	4 July
			Hebr 1,3	21 July
			Hebr 4,1-3	28 July
			Hebr 4, 9-12	31 July
			Hebr 6,10	10 July

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