



TLM Daily Devotions

August 2023





Amazed by Jesus

When I taught in India the main school holidays ran from the last week in November to early February.

One holiday I spent several weeks in northern India close to the Nepali border.

My dad was refurbishing and extending a hospital for the Emmanuel Hospital Association.

The existing hospital had an extensive community programme, running clinics in remote villages.

When I was there, in the evenings after a clinic, they would show the 'Jesus' film dubbed into Hindi.

As there was no electricity in the villages a portable generator powered the projector and sound system.

Nightfall came soon after 6.00p.m. and from far and near across the fields little groups of people, carrying hurricane lamps, made their way to the venue; a large open space in front of the whitewashed gable end of the local school.

The film was based on Luke's Gospel with Jesus' dialogue more or less as Luke recorded it.

As I sat to watch I was not expecting the audience reaction.

Expressions of surprise and delight at the angels.

Boos and hisses for the religious leaders, the Romans and Judas.

Gasps of amazement and wonder at the miracles.

Bewilderment at Jesus' arrest and the fleeing disciples.

Anger at the trial and the false accusations.

Tears and sobs and wails when Jesus died.

Silence when his body was placed in the tomb.

Then whoops and claps and shouts of joy at His resurrection.

The audience entered fully into the whole experience. Bodily, emotionally, vocally, thoughtfully.

If you read through Mark's Gospel, the most frequent response to Jesus is awe and amazement.

Amazement at his words, his teaching, his miracles, his responses to the religious authorities, his compassion and concern for the poor and the marginalised. Even Pilate was amazed.

*The people were **amazed** at his teaching, because he taught them as one who had authority, not as the teachers of the law. Mark 1²²*

*He got up, took his mat and walked out in full view of them all. This **amazed** everyone and they praised God, saying, 'We have never seen anything like this!' Mark 2¹²*

In 11 of the disciples amazement led to love, obedience, and commitment to follow him.

They put all that they were, body mind and spirit into following and serving their Lord.

How do we respond to Jesus?

Bodily, emotionally, vocally, thoughtfully?

In wonder and amazement.

In worship, in love and obedience?

Does Jesus still take your breath away?

Clearly that was the experience of the writer of the hymn below:

*I stand amazed in the presence
Of Jesus the Nazarene
And wonder how He could love me
A sinner, condemned, unclean

O how marvellous! O how wonderful!
And my song shall ever be:
O how marvellous! O how wonderful!
Is my Saviour's love for me!*

Author C. H. Gabriel 1905

John Twynam – Perkins - Formerly chair of TLM Scotland



Step into the storm.

We are all familiar with the passage of Jesus Walking on the water. *Matthew 14:22-33*

What comes to your mind when you read or think about this passage? Is it the image of Jesus walking on the water in the middle of a dark stormy night, and the disciples' terrified that they are seeing a ghost? Or is it Peter walking on the water towards Jesus- his faith at first enabling him to bravely step out of the boat onto the stormy waves; but soon becoming overwhelmed by the roaring wind and waves; and starting to sink. He stretching out his arm and crying out in terror – 'Save me Lord!'.

The passage ends with both Jesus and Peter getting into the boat with the others, and the wind dying down. Recently, our vicar drew our attention to a different aspect of this passage- the significance of the sea. The Sea of Galilee or the Lake of Gennesaret, as it is sometimes referred to, is one of the most familiar bodies of water in the Bible, especially in the Gospels. Many of the events in the earthly life of Jesus took place in the region of Galilee and areas surrounding the Sea of Galilee.

The Jordan River, the Sea of Galilee, and the Dead Sea are all located in the Rift Valley, a geological fissure that forms the longest and deepest crack in the earth's crust. Due to geological features on either side of the Sea of Galilee, sudden and severe storms occur regularly on its waters.

The Jews, in biblical times, had a great fear of the sea. They believed that the sea was a reservoir of evil forces. They spoke of the ancient sea creatures that dwelt there, creatures named Leviathan and Behemoth, who tried to destroy all the order that God had established in the universe.

Jesus' disciples, even the fishermen, probably feared the sea. They would not wade deep into its waters, preferring to fish closer to the shores. The people preferred to travel along the shores to get from one place to another, rather than going across the sea. They believed that in the middle of the sea lived evil forces that churned up storms – the middle of the sea was a place of great fear.

In the passage, Jesus told the disciples to get into the boat and go across the sea, to the other side, where He will meet them. Jesus does not travel with them in the boat, instead He stays back to disperse the crowds.

The disciples obey, they row across the sea and their boat is caught in the middle of the storm. Filled with fear, first by the storm and then by a man walking across the water, they cry out.

Jesus speaks to them saying, "Take heart; it is I. Do not be afraid." He silences the storm, calms the sea and their fears; and his presence leads them safely to the shore. Jesus wanted his disciples to know that he is more than a miracle worker and healer. He is the Son of God with power over fear and evil.

As Christians, we believe that Jesus is the son of God, with power over all things. Jesus bids us to step into the sea of our fears and He will meet us there. This is our faith – Jesus will meet us in the storm, His grace

abounds in deepest waters. Even if we falter, we will feel His power and know His peace - peace that surpasses human understanding.

Oceans by Hillsong United:

https://r.search.yahoo.com/_ylt=Awr.QpAOK1Fk5vlbTjZ3Bwx.;_ylu=Y29sbwMEcG9zAzEEdnRpZAMEc2VjA3Nj/RV=2/RE=1683069839/RO=10/RU=https%3a%2f%2fwww.youtube.com%2fwatch%3fv%3dM_XV6eC2eVw/RK=2/RS=PauUVLqm63xff5lwztl.FeIEjCM-

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



The call... *Cleanse those...*

Matthew 10,7-8

The call cries out: *"Cleanse those with leprosy"*

The call is heeded:

"Here we are Lord, we'll go, send us, use us!"

Decades come and decades go

The call is still the same: *"Cleanse those with leprosy"*

The faces at our doors are never ending

Faces hiding in shame

Eyes flickering from side to side

The air is filled with fear and tension

Hands and feet wrapped in bandages

A person overcome with shame

A person despised and rejected by many

The call cries out: *"Cleanse those with leprosy"*

The call is heeded

The doors are open - never closed

Beckoning arms and words ring out - *"Come on in"*

The search begins - Loving fingers

Searching eyes scan a body

Enough evidence - The disease is confirmed

The call cries out: *"Cleanse those with leprosy"*

The call is heeded

The medical voice speaks - *"We know what's ailing you*

We have a cure for you - you will get better

We will care for you - you will get better

We will bandage your wounds - you will get better

and We will pray for you!"

The call cries out: *"Cleanse those with leprosy"*

The call is heeded

Fear begins to fade from the eyes
Hope rises - *"I'm going to get well
No more hiding"*
The journey to a new state of health has begun

The call cries out: *"Cleanse those with leprosy"*
The call is heeded

Two months later - The ulcers have healed
The aching nerve pain has subsided
The words I've been waiting to hear
"You can go home now"

The question: At home what will happen?
A care worker has gone ahead of me

When I got home there was a banner
"WELCOME HOME"
My family understood my condition

The call cries out: *"Cleanse those with leprosy"*
The call is heeded

Fear is dispelled
Eyes filled with hope and peace
No more bandages - No aching nerves

Yet I have an island of care to return to
If needs be to get help again
An island of loving, caring, accepting help

The call still is: *"Cleanse those with leprosy"*

Will the call be heeded?

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 12

For the director of music. According to *sheminith*. A psalm of David.

¹ Help, LORD, for no one is faithful anymore;
those who are loyal have vanished from the human race.

² Everyone lies to their neighbor;
they flatter with their lips
but harbor deception in their hearts.

³ May the LORD silence all flattering lips
and every boastful tongue—

⁴ those who say,

“By our tongues we will prevail;
our own lips will defend us—who is lord over us?”

⁵ “Because the poor are plundered and the needy groan,
I will now arise,” says the LORD.

“I will protect them from those who malign them.”

⁶ And the words of the LORD are flawless,
like silver purified in a crucible,
like gold refined seven times.

⁷ You, LORD, will keep the needy safe
and will protect us forever from the wicked,

⁸ who freely strut about
when what is vile is honored by the human race.



Psalm 13

For the director of music. A psalm of David.

¹ How long, LORD? Will you forget me forever?

How long will you hide your face from me?

² How long must I wrestle with my thoughts

and day after day have sorrow in my heart?

How long will my enemy triumph over me?

³ Look on me and answer, LORD my God.

Give light to my eyes, or I will sleep in death,

⁴ and my enemy will say, "I have overcome him,"

and my foes will rejoice when I fall.

⁵ But I trust in your unfailing love;

my heart rejoices in your salvation.

⁶ I will sing the LORD's praise,

for he has been good to me.



Steps Jesus took, to stay in the will of God!

1) Jesus regularly made time to commune with His Father in Heaven.

Matthew 14:23 – *“And after He had dismissed the crowds, He went up on the mountain by Himself to pray. When evening came, He was there alone.”* (cf Mark 1:35)

2) Jesus thanked His Father for everything.

Matthew 14:19 – *“...and taking the 5 loaves and 2 fish, He looked up to heaven and gave thanks...”* (cf Luke 22:17,19; John 11:41)

3) Jesus did nothing without His Father.

John 5:19 – *“So Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of His own accord, but only what He sees the Father doing. For whatever the Father does, that the Son does likewise.”* (Mark 7:33,34)

4) Jesus let His Father guide Him in all His decisions.

John 11:4 – *“Jesus said, “This illness does not lead to death. It is for the glory of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it.”* (John 2:2-4)

5) Jesus gave His Father the honour in all things.

John 17:1 – *“Jesus lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said, “Father, the hour has come; glorify the Son that the Son may glorify You...”* (Matth. 11:25,26)

6) Jesus lived in the peace of God – Jesus was not influenced by anything!

Mark 4:38 – *“But Jesus was in the stern of the boat, asleep on the cushion”* (John 6:16ff)

7) Jesus constantly extended His love and pity towards people.

Mark 1:41 – *“Moved with pity, Jesus stretched out His hand and touched him and said to the leprosy sufferer, ‘I will; be clean.’”* (John 11:32-36)

8) Jesus’ constant priority and pursuit was to do only the will of God His Father.

Luke 19:10 – *“For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.”* (John 4:4; 10:16)

Hebrews 13:20ff – *“Now may the God of peace...equip you with everything good that you may do His will, working in us that which is pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to Whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.”*



You are mine

Isaiah 43:1b "Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name; you are mine."

I attended Spurgeon's Bible College in London years ago. Its motto, set in stained glass in the entrance hall is: "ET TENEO ET TENEOR", Latin which roughly translates as "I both hold and am held". It's a lovely concept, not just for trainee ministers but for all of us in the family of God. We are *held* by God and in the embrace of his people, the Christian community (the church), and, as part of that kingdom and family, we *hold*.

Writer Richard Rohr says: "*That which owns me is greater than that which I own.*" The idea of being owned or possessed or *held* by God is powerful, its implications are deep! Our Father God says through Isaiah, "*I have redeemed you (bought you back) ...you are mine.*" Paul -in the light of Christ's work as the Redeemer- writes, "*You are not your own; you were bought at a price.*" (1 Corinthians 6:19-20). And the Old Testament prophet Malachi puts it with poetic beauty (best in the old English Authorised Version!), "*they (God's people) shall be mine, saith the LORD of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels*" (Malachi 3:17)

The need to belong, the sense of belonging, of being owned, *held* in love by another being -human or divine- is a very precious one in the human heart. It is a need perhaps especially acutely felt in the leprosy community, where there may be some distancing, perhaps lack of loving embrace and a loss of feeling in hands to hold. But the God who created us with that need is also the one who meets it, saying simply, not controllingly but lovingly, "*You are mine*".

So what of the other side? *I hold as well as being held*. It must be the height of human joy and fulfilment to 'hold' another human being in love, -in marriage of course, but also in friendship, professional roles, parenting, with love in and beyond a family. But such holding, such 'owning' of another person, is a delicate matter, both a privilege and a responsibility. It can -as history and the news show- be controlling, abusive, exploitative, in everything from despotic leaders to religious cults, and behind-closed-doors relationships.

But we thank God that he who owns us has a greater and more loving grasp (John 10:29) than ever we can -or should- have over another; but for him to share with us the image-of-God desire and capacity lovingly to 'own' others is a gift to accept and express in *his* way to *his* glory... and to enjoy, in friendship, in family, in church, at work, or wherever.

We may also consider the God-given call to hold onto other things, like truth, integrity and Godly conduct. "*Hold on to that which is good*" (1 Thessalonians 5:21), "*...hold firmly to the word of life*" (Philippians 2:16), "*...hold(ing) onto faith and a good conscience*" (1 Timothy 1:19), -and more (2 Thessalonians 2:15, Revelation 2:25, 3:11, etc.).

Today, let's remember the truth of, "*That which owns me is greater than that which I own.*" It should not be my possessions or other 'worldly' things which possess me, but the loving Father who has redeemed me for himself! As an old hymn says, "*For I am his and he is mine for ever and for ever.*"

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



Waiting upon God

I wait for the Lord, my whole being waits, and in his word I put my hope. I wait for the Lord more than watchmen wait for the morning, more than watchmen wait for the morning. (Psalm 130:5-6, NIV)

When we find it difficult to pray, we should strive to align our hearts and minds with the Spirit of supplication. All our difficulties in prayer originate from the simple reality that we are not in harmony with the Spirit of God. Too often we resist and do not want to do what He is asking of us. This causes our prayer life to become slow and heavy. We do not see much effect of our prayers and it seems as if they are not answered. If we continue to resist, the Spirit of God will ultimately leave us and our prayer life will wither and die a quiet death. However, the true purpose of the difficulties we experience in prayer is to make us realize our helplessness and our dependence, not just for our own physical and spiritual needs, but also for our ability to pray. With that realization, our prayers will become truly Prayer.

Whatever we pray for, whether temporary or spiritual blessings, great things or small, whether for ourselves or for others – our prayers should dissolve into a quiet waiting upon the Lord so that his Spirit can make us see what we should pray for in each particular case.

Enter into prayer and ask God how you can pray for the people around you – your family, colleagues, patients - in accordance with his will. Perhaps there are things the Holy Spirit wants to show you where you can gain a different perspective or decide on new steps to take. Perhaps He simply wants to teach you to trust him more, so that you grow more confident. Ask the Lord what you may pray for the people around you He loves so much.

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.



The real joy of the journey

*Every valley shall be filled in,
Every mountain and hill made low,
The crooked roads shall become straight,
The rough ways smooth.
And all mankind will see God's salvation. Luke 3:5 - 6*

When Barbara and I are on a long car journey and the traffic is slow we sometimes remember journeys we made when the children were small. They'd read for a bit, then if we were lucky they'd nod off to sleep. But when they woke there'd be the dreaded question. "Mum, are we nearly there yet?" "How long will it be, Dad?" Time matters and, as life gets busier and faster, it seems to get ever more important.

When we start a journey we usually ask "When do we arrive?" And if we're on the train these days the answer may well be "Who knows?" Life might be a bit richer and more interesting if instead of asking how long the journey takes we asked what we could see on the way. Real travellers, explorers, often say that the thrill and satisfaction lies in the journey itself. Not in the arrival. The experience gained as we travel is the most valuable thing. If we concentrate too hard on the end result we may lose the joy of the journey.

Time's for people, not the other way round, and the real joy of the journey we make through life is the people we travel with and the shared experience. Travel well today.

Lord of the journey, give me the joy of knowing you are with me every step I take.

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)



Set priorities

"I have established you, that you will go, bear fruit, and your fruit will last" John 15,16

In order to accomplish God's plan, one must set clear priorities and follow them each day. One author jokingly said, "A conclusion is when you get tired of thinking. Alas, so many people set their priorities where they run out of steam. This is probably not your intention. You also don't want to allow others to decide your agenda or your priorities. There are many ways to determine priorities. First and foremost, your plan must always align with God's will for you (see Heb 13:20-21). Jesus said, "I have chosen you and appointed you, that you may go and bear fruit, and your fruit may remain."

1) You must know that God has chosen and appointed you for a particular area of service.

2) Your purpose in life must be the fruit that "lasts" after you. Used well, money and power can help, but it should never be a goal or the desire of the heart.

*So how do you set the right priorities?

By learning to know yourself better, then to focus on your strengths which make the best use of the skills received from God.

*What brings me the best performance and the best reward?

*What do I love the most and what do I do best?

These are my reference gifts. I will therefore devote 80% of my efforts to the most important 20% of my activities.

In summary: Jesus said that I must give my attention to the areas that bear the most fruit.

Prayer of the day

Help me Lord to set my priorities.

Se fixer des priorités

« Je vous ai établis, afin que vous alliez, que vous portiez du fruit, et que votre fruit demeure »

Jean 15.16

Afin d'accomplir le plan de Dieu, on doit établir des priorités claires et les respecter chaque jour. Un auteur a dit en plaisantant : « Une conclusion est le moment où l'on est fatigué de penser. » Hélas, tant de personnes établissent leurs priorités là où elles sont à bout de souffle. Ce n'est sans doute pas votre

intention. Vous ne voulez pas non plus permettre aux autres de décider de votre agenda ou de vos priorités. Il existe de nombreuses façons de déterminer les priorités. Tout d'abord, et avant tout, votre plan doit toujours s'aligner sur la volonté de Dieu pour vous (voir Hé 13.20-21). Jésus a dit : « Je vous ai choisis et je vous ai établis, afin que vous alliez, que vous portiez du fruit, et que votre fruit demeure ».

1) Vous devez savoir que Dieu vous a choisi(e) et désigné(e) pour un domaine de service particulier.

2) Votre but dans la vie doit être le fruit qui « demeure » après vous. Bien utilisés, l'argent et le pouvoir peuvent aider, mais ça ne doit jamais être un but ou le désir du cœur.

*Alors, comment établir les bonnes priorités ?

En apprenant à mieux se connaître, puis à se concentrer sur ses points forts qui utilisent au mieux les compétences reçues de Dieu.

*Qu'est-ce qui m'apporte le meilleur rendement et la meilleure récompense ? *Qu'est-ce que j'aime le plus et que je fais le mieux ?

Ce sont mes dons référence. Je vais donc consacrer 80 % de mes efforts aux 20 % les plus importants de mes activités.

En résumé :

Jésus a dit que je dois accorder mon attention aux domaines qui portent le plus de fruits.

Prière du jour

Aide-moi Seigneur à me fixer des priorités.

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 14

For the director of music. Of David.

¹The fool[Ⓜ] says in his heart,
“There is no God.”

They are corrupt, their deeds are vile;
there is no one who does good.

²The LORD looks down from heaven
on all mankind
to see if there are any who understand,
any who seek God.

³All have turned away, all have become corrupt;
there is no one who does good,
not even one.

⁴Do all these evildoers know nothing?
They devour my people as though eating bread;
they never call on the LORD.

⁵But there they are, overwhelmed with dread,
for God is present in the company of the righteous.

⁶You evildoers frustrate the plans of the poor,
but the LORD is their refuge.

⁷Oh, that salvation for Israel would come out of Zion!
When the LORD restores his people,
let Jacob rejoice and Israel be glad!



Psalm 15

A psalm of David.

¹ LORD, who may dwell in your sacred tent?
Who may live on your holy mountain?
² The one whose walk is blameless,
who does what is righteous,
who speaks the truth from their heart;
³ whose tongue utters no slander,
who does no wrong to a neighbor,
and casts no slur on others;
⁴ who despises a vile person
but honors those who fear the LORD;
who keeps an oath even when it hurts,
and does not change their mind;
⁵ who lends money to the poor without interest;
who does not accept a bribe against the innocent.
Whoever does these things
will never be shaken.



First Miracle.....Healing of Leprosy Affected

Matthew 8:1-4

In the ancient world leprosy was the most terrible of all diseases. The physical condition of the leprosy affected was terrible; but there was something which made it worse. Leprosy affected was treated "as if they were, in effect, dead men." The moment leprosy was diagnosed, the leprosy affected was absolutely and completely banish from the human society. *"He shall remain unclean as long as he has the disease; he is unclean; he shall dwell alone in a habitation outside of the camp" (Leviticus 13:46)*. The leprosy affected had to go with rent clothes, disheveled hair, with covering upon this upper lip. As he went, he had to cry: "Unclean, unclean" (*Leviticus 13:45*).

In Palestine in the time of Jesus the leprosy affected was barred from Jerusalem and from all walled towns. In the synagogue there was provided for him a little isolated chamber, ten feet high and six feet wide, called the *Mechitash*. There many rules concerning leprosy affected how he makes the place and other things unclean. There never has been any disease which so separated a man from his fellow –men as leprosy did. And this was the man whom Jesus touched. To a Jew there would be no more amazing sentence in the New Testament than the simple statement: "And Jesus stretched out his hand and touched the leprosy affected."

LOVE IN ACTION: Of all the Gospels writers Matthew is the most orderly. He never gets out his material haphazardly. If in *Matthew* one thing follows another in a certain sequence, there may be always a reason for that sequence: and it is so here. In Chapter 5, 6, and 7 Matthew has given us Sermon on the Mount. We can say that in these chapters Matthew has given us his account of the *words* of Jesus; and now in chapter 8 he gives an account of the *deeds* of Jesus. Chapters 5, 6, 7 show us the divine wisdom in speech; chapter 8 show us the divine love in Action. Chapter 8 is a chapter of miracles.

We see in these verses (1-4), very first there is healing of leprosy affected. Here we see Jesus touching the untouchable. The leprosy affected was banished from the society of men: to touch him, and even to approach him, was to break the Law. Here we see the man who was kept at arm's length by all men wrapped around with pity and the compassion of the love of God.

COMPASSION BEYOND THE LAW: In the miracle we noticed two things – the approach of leprosy affected and the response of Jesus.

There were three elements in the approach of leprosy affected.

1. The leprosy affected came with *Confidence*. He had no doubt that, if Jesus willed, Jesus could make him clean. No leprosy affected would ever have come near an orthodox scribe or Rabbi; he knew too well that he would be away; but this came to Jesus. He had perfect confidence in Jesus' willingness to welcome the man anyone else would have driven away. No man need ever feel himself too unclean to come to Jesus Christ. He has perfect confidence in Jesus' power. Leprosy was the one disease for which there was no prescribed rabbinic remedy. But this was sure that Jesus could do what no one else could do. No man need ever feel himself incurable in body or unforgivable in soul while Jesus Christ exists.
2. The leprosy affected came with *humility*. He did not demand healing; he only said "if you will, you can cleanse me." It was as if he said, "I know that I do not matter: I know that other men will flee from me and will have nothing to do with me; I know that I have no claim on you; but perhaps in

your divine condescension you will give your power even to such as I am.” It is the mumble heart which is conscious of nothing but its need that finds its way to Christ.

3. The leprosy affected came with *reverence*. The Authorized Version says that he *worshipped* Jesus. The Greek verb is *proskunein* and that word is never used of anything but *worship of the Gods*; it always describes a man’s feeling and action in presence of the divine. The leprosy affected could never have told anyone what he thought Jesus was; but he knew that in the presence of Jesus he was in the presence of God. It is enough to be convinced that when we are confronted with Jesus Christ, we are confronted with the love and power of Almighty God.

So to this approach of the leprosy affected there came the reaction of Jesus.

First and foremost, that reaction was *Compassion*. The Law said that Jesus must avoid contact with that man and threatened him with terrible uncleanness if he allowed the leprosy affected to come within six feet of him; but Jesus stretched out his hand and touched him. The medical knowledge of the day would have said that Jesus was running a desperate risk of a ghastly infection; but Jesus stretched out his hand and touched him.

For Jesus there was only one obligation in life -- and that was to help. There was only one law – and that law of love. The obligation of love took precedence over all other rules and laws and regulations; it made him defy all physical risk.

To a good doctor a man sick of a loathsome disease is not a disgusting spectacle; he is a human being who needs his skills. To a doctor a child sick of an infectious disease is not a menace; he is a child who needs to be helped.

Jesus was like that: God is like that; WE must be like that. The true Christian will break any convention and will take any risk to help a fellow man in need.

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



How do I live a purpose filled joyful life? – Part 3

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 3 - Evangelism (telling the Good News of Jesus Christ)

Evangelism is the commitment to publicly preach God's Word, telling people clearly what God says about His Son Jesus Christ and what Jesus had done for us. It is announcing, proclaiming and preaching the Gospel (John 3:16, 2 Peter 3:9). Evangelism is exhorting sinners to accept Christ Jesus as their personal saviour by recognizing that without Him they are lost spiritually in the world.

Peter did the first evangelic gospel preaching on the day of the Pentecost (Acts 1:8, Acts 2:38). Inspired by the Holy Spirit, Peter took upon himself the role of an evangelist to tell people the truth/Good News of Jesus Christ. The resurrection of Jesus gave the disciples the hope of victory over death and eternal life in Jesus Christ. Peter shared with the Jews and the Gentiles the hope of a new life through faith in Jesus' atoning sacrifice for the sins of mankind on the cross. He called people to repent of their sins and receive Jesus as their Saviour. The Good News is not just what Jesus had accomplished but who He is. Jesus, the divine God is the Saviour is the Good News.

Evangelism is giving a call to trust and turn to Jesus, the Soul Saviour (1 Timothy 2:4). It is giving a divine command (to repent of sins) and a divine invitation (to receive salvation and not earn it). The fact that Jesus has restored Man's relationship with God by paying fully for our sins (disobedience against God) is too good news not to be shared with those who do not know Jesus. In preaching the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, we are making visible the invisible reality of Christ, the Son of God. When we evangelize, we are "gospelizing" – we are spreading the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Very often the miracles, the promises and the atoning sacrifice of Jesus are spoken when Jesus is presented to non-believers. While these are important, what is unique in Jesus is His divinity. Only a divine God can forgive man's sins. Only a perfect God (Jesus) could pay for the sins of man. Evangelism is telling people what the truth is. Our God is compassionate and merciful. He is also a God of justice. For this very reason Jesus had to go to the cross to sacrifice Himself to save us from eternal damnation in hell. The blood of Jesus cleanses our sins. Everyone must know this.

One's personal walk with Jesus is an integral part of telling the Good News. It is sharing one's personal encounter with Christ and His redemptive love. One's personal story may encourage others to put their faith in Jesus. One's desire is to share the joy and hope that one has experienced by trusting Jesus. What is shared is what one has experienced in reality. The disciples/apostles even in the face of death in the hands of unbelievers had refused to deny their salvation. Just as Jesus gave his life to save sinners, the disciples/apostles had sacrificed their lives for advancing the Gospel.

In evangelizing, the believer fulfils Jesus Christ's command to be His witness. We are to tell people that there is hope of fulness of life in His kingdom, in this world and beyond. We are no longer shackled by the deceptions of Satan. The enemy has already been defeated. In a world where there is increasing hopelessness and strife, the Gospel of Jesus shines as a beacon of hope. In evangelism we are lifting up this glorious light of Jesus to dispel darkness in the lives of many. Evangelism is letting people know that a new world awaits them in the presence of Jesus, our Lord and Saviour.

Sharing the Gospel is my love offering to my neighbour. It is not propagating a religion but sharing the personal relationship with God in Jesus. It is to let people know that the eternal God loves them just as they are, with all their imperfections. Jesus died on the cross while we were yet sinners. As an evangelist I should be faithful to every word I speak. A saved soul must save other unsaved souls. Evangelism is sharing the Good News and trusting the Holy Spirit to change people's hearts.

Jesus is the Good News! Tell it!

In gratitude for His grace

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

The previous parts of this series can be read on the 20th July and the 20th June.



A Story of Change

I studied System Information in Indonesia University.

When my parents decided that I should study in Indonesia, I was so happy and thought I would have freedom, I will live by myself with no one to monitor me. In the beginning, everything went as planned but when it came to the final research, I started to have problems. I realized that I didn't have good writing skills in Bahasa Indonesia; the lectures were not as friendly as I had been told; and I would have to delay another year because of all the obstacles I had encountered. I started to give up and intended to quit and I no longer wanted to proceed to the graduation.

With three days left to finish my thesis, I was asked by the pastor to serve in the church as a cameraman for 1 full day. I was in conflict, should I serve God or finish the thesis? Then I just decided and chose to serve God and have faith that God will open the door for me.

With only 2 days left to register as a graduate, when I was being guided by a lecturer, suddenly everything was streamlined, and my guidance lecturer was no longer raised obstacle to my graduation. In the end I was able to graduate that year too and indeed it happened, I was able to finish my thesis on time with the help of some friends at the church.

Matthew 6:33 NIV. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

-- Thank You God --

Elfan Cadson Soffian Lantakay - *Media and Communication Officer*



"I will not sacrifice to the Lord ... offerings that cost me nothing."

" II Samuel 24:24

As an evangelist in the hills of Swaziland, he had covered thousands of kilometres on his bicycle visiting villages, preaching, encouraging Christians and distributing basic medicines. One day I received the message that his tyres were so worn that the repeated punctures were making his travels increasingly difficult.

I made a point of visiting him and presented him with a brand new set of tyres. He offered me a bag of mangoes. Though I love the fruit, I protested "You do not have to try and pay me for the tyres, they are a gift."

His response was significant "I know I cannot afford to pay you for the tyres. Now we are friends, but if I accept them and give you nothing in return, I am dependent on you and you become my master. If you cannot accept my mangoes, I must refuse the tyres".

In our relationship with God, it is clear that we cannot contribute to our salvation. There is nothing we can do or bring. Christ has done it all, we must accept it as a gift (Romans 6:23). Sometimes our pride, self-sufficiency, or desire to be independent makes us loath to accept His grace.

At the human level, it is easy to become paternalistic, haughty or proud, willing to help others but finding it difficult to accept that we can also receive from them. In the measure that we recognise our vulnerability, we can identify with those we are helping and our interdependence gives us credibility and opens the door for true reciprocal service.

Prayer "Father, help me to realise that You can work through the other person to meet my needs and bless me, regardless of his social, educational or financial status. In you, we all have something to give and we all need to receive."

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.



Fellowship

"They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. ... All the believers were together and had everything in common." Acts 2:42-47

Since joining TLM, I've realised that some of the best moments I've experienced have been when we have met as a Global Fellowship, and when I've had the privilege of visiting some of the artisans and projects that TLM supports. It has long since occurred to me that perhaps the reason for this is that these are the moments when I've experienced a deep sense of 'fellowship'. A distinctive image etched in my mind is the TLM Global Fellowship time of worship and Communion in Lane End Conference Centre, Sept 2013, where it I truly felt it was a reflection of the Kingdom of God worshipping Him so lustily that we almost raised the roof- in a unique multinational, multi-cultural, multilingual way.

Fellowship is such a precious thing but the Bible reminds us that it is not just that special sense of togetherness that comes during times of worship. It is so humbling to remember that, firstly, "Our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ" (1 John 1:3), and that this is what makes us Christian. The verses from Acts 2 remind us fellowship is also the habitual sharing, the constant giving to and receiving from each other. It is our fellowship with God which enables us to have fellowship with other Christians, and our fellowship with other Christians leads to fellowship with God.

How empowering it is to know that we are not left to our own devices to create an environment of fellowship. Acts 2:42-47 describes a community of faith that operates in the power of God's Spirit. The virtues of justice, worship, and mutuality are being achieved by extraordinary people; they are signs of the Holy Spirit at work within a community of people who understand themselves as united in purpose and identity.

So, as we continue to grow as The Leprosy Mission Global Fellowship, my prayer is that we grow in Fellowship

- with God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
- with each other as a community of faith,
- with those we serve: people affected by leprosy and our supporters.

Let's also rejoice and give thanks for the gift of Fellowship. *"Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights,..."* James 1:17

May the Lord bless you and keep you. May the grace He has given you be the grace that you share with others.

Jo-Anne Thomson – Head of Fundraising TLM

(2016)



Psalm 16

A *miktam* of David.

- ¹ Keep me safe, my God,
for in you I take refuge.
- ² I say to the LORD, "You are my Lord;
apart from you I have no good thing."
- ³ I say of the holy people who are in the land,
"They are the noble ones in whom is all my delight."
- ⁴ Those who run after other gods will suffer more and more.
I will not pour out libations of blood to such gods
or take up their names on my lips.
- ⁵ LORD, you alone are my portion and my cup;
you make my lot secure.
- ⁶ The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places;
surely I have a delightful inheritance.
- ⁷ I will praise the LORD, who counsels me;
even at night my heart instructs me.
- ⁸ I keep my eyes always on the LORD.
With him at my right hand, I will not be shaken.
- ⁹ Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices;
my body also will rest secure,
- ¹⁰ because you will not abandon me to the realm of the dead,
nor will you let your faithful one see decay.
- ¹¹ You make known to me the path of life;
you will fill me with joy in your presence,
with eternal pleasures at your right hand.



Psalm 17

A prayer of David.

¹ Hear me, LORD, my plea is just;
listen to my cry.
Hear my prayer—
it does not rise from deceitful lips.

² Let my vindication come from you;
may your eyes see what is right.

³ Though you probe my heart,
though you examine me at night and test me,
you will find that I have planned no evil;
my mouth has not transgressed.

⁴ Though people tried to bribe me,
I have kept myself from the ways of the violent
through what your lips have commanded.

⁵ My steps have held to your paths;
my feet have not stumbled.

⁶ I call on you, my God, for you will answer me;
turn your ear to me and hear my prayer.

⁷ Show me the wonders of your great love,
you who save by your right hand
those who take refuge in you from their foes.

⁸ Keep me as the apple of your eye;
hide me in the shadow of your wings

⁹ from the wicked who are out to destroy me,
from my mortal enemies who surround me.

¹⁰ They close up their callous hearts,
and their mouths speak with arrogance.

¹¹ They have tracked me down, they now surround me,
with eyes alert, to throw me to the ground.

¹² They are like a lion hungry for prey,
like a fierce lion crouching in cover.

¹³ Rise up, LORD, confront them, bring them down;
with your sword rescue me from the wicked.

¹⁴ By your hand save me from such people, LORD,
from those of this world whose reward is in this life.
May what you have stored up for the wicked fill their bellies;
may their children gorge themselves on it,
and may there be leftovers for their little ones.

¹⁵ As for me, I will be vindicated and will see your face;
when I awake, I will be satisfied with seeing your likeness.



“Diet sheets” series 2

Preamble to the “Let us” Diet series.

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!

Diet sheet #3 - Holding on!

✠ “Let-Us” hold tightly to our Christian faith

*“Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has ascended into heaven, Jesus the Son of God, **let us hold firmly to the faith we profess.** For we do not have a high priest who is unable to feel sympathy for our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are – **yet he did not sin.**”*

The amplified Bible puts it like this

*...**let us hold fast our confession [of faith and cling tenaciously to our absolute trust in Him as Saviour].**”*

The thoughts that follow this “**let us**” reminds us that Jesus our High Priest fully, totally and completely understands the temptations and challenges we go through as humans.

- This is very important for us because sometimes, maybe often, taking the Christian route makes you go against the flow of mankind.

Jesus had a fleeting moment when He said:

“Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done.”

Jesus knew and fully understood what was ahead of Him, but He held on, He had a mission to accomplish and nothing was going to distract Him!

- Obedience, commitment and passion allowed Jesus to push through to the very end!

As believers hold on to the faith we profess!

John 14:6 NIVUK "Jesus answered, I am the way and the truth and the life. No-one comes to the Father except through me."

John 3:7 NIVUK "You should not be surprised at my saying, "You must be born again.""

There is no other way to heaven but through Jesus!

- That can be a very hard saying living in a world that thrives on compromise, substitute gospels and millions of false teachings.
- Jesus died on the cross because He refused any substitute or a watered down version of salvation.

There is no compromise in the Kingdom of God!

Summary: On the "Let Us" diet 3:

let us hold firmly to the faith we profess.

Don't let anybody or anything rob you of your salvation found in Jesus Christ!

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.



Diet sheet #4 - Having confidence in the presence of Our Heavenly Father



“Let-Us” have confidence when we come to Our Heavenly Father’s throne.

Hebrews 4:16 NIVUK

“Let us then approach God’s throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.”

Not an arrogant confidence, but a humble confidence knowing that you are there because of grace and mercy given to us because of what Jesus did for us!

- Never ever forget we’re facing the Most High God, the creator and sustainer of everything in the whole of the universe!
- God is our Father and friend but not our chum, He will always remain God Almighty and needs respect from us. (
- We’re encouraged to be bold **but not disrespectful!**

Look what John saw:

Revelation 7:11-12 NIVUK

“All the angels were standing round the throne and round the elders and the four living creatures. They fell down on their faces before the throne and worshipped God, saying: ‘Amen! Praise and glory and wisdom and thanks and honour and power and strength be to our God for ever and ever. Amen!’”

I think and hope that when we stand before God’s throne it’s not some casual flippant way but with the respect and honour Our Heavenly Father should receive.

Summary: On the “Let Us” diet 4:

 *Keep a high level of respect towards God, a humble confidence when we approach Him.*

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.



Crackpot Beauty

Summing it all up, friends, I'd say you'll do best by filling your minds and meditating on things true, noble, reputable, authentic, compelling, gracious—the best, not the worst; the beautiful, not the ugly; things to praise, not things to curse. Philippians 4:8 (The Message)

There is an old Chinese story that never fails to inspire ...

There was once an old lady who had to take a long walk every day to fetch water from a nearby stream. She collected the water in 2 pots that were strung on either end of a long pole that she carried across her shoulders. One of the pots had a small crack in it, but the other was just perfect. At the end of her daily walk, she always arrived home with just one and a half pots of water as the cracked pot had slowly dripped out its contents all the way home.

The handsome perfect pot became very big headed about the wonderful job it did, while the cracked pot became, more and more miserable.

You'll have to indulge me here - these are pots with thoughts and feelings!

After months and months of failing to return home with a full quota of water the cracked pot finally spoke up, *"I'm so sorry, I don't know why you don't throw me out, I leak so badly that I only ever manage to bring home half the water."*

Then the old lady smiled, *"Did you notice that there are flowers on your side of the path, but not on the other pot's side? That's because I have always known about your flaw, so I planted flower seeds on your side of the path, and every day as we return home, you water them. For months I've been picking beautiful fragrant flowers for our kitchen table. Without you being just the way you are, we wouldn't have this beauty to grace our house."*

None of us are quite perfect, in fact it's the cracks and flaws we each have that make our lives together so very interesting and rewarding. So, look for the best in everyone and everything, and to all the crackpots reading this, have a great day and don't forget to stop and smell the flowers along your path!

*Lord, help us to look for all that's good in every situation,
and to cheerfully make the best of each new challenge.*



Charles Spurgeon on Doing Missions in Chaotic Times – Part 1

“And Jesus came and said to them, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit[.]’” (Matthew 28:18-19)

The missionary is constantly tempted to overcomplicate the missionary task. We forget that the Great Commission is a call for the proclamation of the gospel—nothing less. This is more relevant than ever in our trying cultural setting.

On April 21, 1861, Charles Spurgeon delivered a sermon titled “The Missionaries’ Charge and Charter” (#383) addressing the core of the missionary task.

The following manuscript has been adapted with minimal change. Consider the weight of Spurgeon’s exhortations to goers and senders today.

“While I was meditating in private upon this text, I felt myself carried away by its power. I was quite unable to calmly consider its terms or to investigate its argument. The command with which the text concludes repeated itself again, and again, and again in my ears, till I found it impossible to study, for my thoughts were running hither and thither, asking a thousand questions, all of them intended to help me in answering for myself the solemn inquiry, “How am I to go, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost?”

The practical lesson seemed to me to overwhelm in my mind the argument of which that lesson is but a conclusion, “Go ye and teach all nations.” My ears seemed to hear it as if Christ were then speaking it to me. I could realize his presence by my side. I thought I could see him lift his pierced hands, and hear him speak, as he was known to speak, with authority, blended with meekness, “Go ye and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the All-glorious God.”

Oh, I would that the church could hear the Savior addressing these words to her now, for the words of Christ are living words, not having power in them yesterday alone, but today also. The injunctions of the Savior are perpetual in their obligation, they were not binding upon merely apostles, but upon us also, and upon every Christian does this yoke fall, “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.” We are not exempt today from the service of the first followers of the Lamb, our marching orders are the same as theirs, and our Captain requires from us

obedience as prompt and perfect as from them. Oh, that his message may not fall upon deaf ears, or be heard by uninterested souls!

Brethren, the heathen are perishing, shall we let them perish? His name is blasphemed, shall we be quiet and still? The honor of Christ is cast into the dust, and his foes revile his person and resist his throne, shall we his soldiers suffer this, and not find our hands feeling for the hilt of our sword, the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God? Our Lord delays his coming, shall we begin to sleep, or to eat, or to be drunken? Shall we not rather gird up the loins of our mind, and cry unto him, "Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly"?

Charles Haddon Spurgeon (19 June 1834– 31 January 1892) was an English Particular Baptist preacher. Spurgeon remains highly influential among Christians of various denominations, to some of whom he is known as the "Prince of Preachers". He was a strong figure in the Reformed Baptist tradition, defending the 1689 London Baptist Confession of Faith, and opposing the liberal and pragmatic theological tendencies in the Church of his day. Spurgeon was pastor of the congregation of the New Park Street Chapel (later the Metropolitan Tabernacle) in London for 38 years.

Source: internet



Charles Spurgeon on Doing Missions in Chaotic Times – Part 2

*“And Jesus came and said to them, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit[.]’”
(Matthew 28:18-19)*

The scoffing skeptics of these last days have said that the anticipated conquest of the world for Christ is but a dream, or an ambitious thought, which crossed our leader’s mind, but which never is to be accomplished. It is asserted by some that the superstitions of the heathen are too strong to be battered down by our teachings, and that the strongholds of Satan are utterly impregnable against our attacks. Shall it be so? Shall we be content to foolishly sit still?

Nay, rather let us work out the problem, let us prove the promise of God to be true, let us prove the words of Jesus to be words of soberness, let us show the efficacy of his blood, and the invincibility of his Spirit by going in the spirit of faith, teaching all nations, and winning them to the obedience of Christ our Lord.

I do not know how to begin to preach this morning, but still it seems to me, standing here, as if I heard that voice saying, “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations.” And my soul sometimes pants and longs for the liberty to preach Christ where he was never preached before, not to build upon another man’s foundation, but to go to some untrodden land, some waste where the foot of Christ’s minister was never seen, that there “the solitary place might be glad for us, and the wilderness rejoice and blossom as the rose.”

I have made it a solemn question whether I might not testify in China or India the grace of Jesus, and in the sight of God I have answered it. I solemnly feel that my position in England will not permit my leaving the sphere in which I now am, or else tomorrow I would offer myself as a missionary. Oh, do none of you hear the call this morning?

You who are free from so great a work as that which is cast upon me—you who have talents as yet undevoted to any special end, and powers of being as yet unconsecrated to any given purpose, and unconfined to any one sphere? Do you not hear my Master saying, in tones of plaintive sorrow, blended with an authority which is not to be denied, “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost”?

Oh, that I could preach like Peter the Hermit—a better crusade than he! Oh, that there were might in some human lips to move the thousands of our Israel to advance at once, unanimously and irresistibly to the world’s conquest, like one tremendous tide rising from the depths of the ocean, to sweep over the sands,

the barren sands which are now given up to desolation and death! Oh, that once again the voice of thunder could be heard, and the lightning spirit could penetrate each heart, that as one man the entire church might take the marching orders of her Lord, and go teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of Israel's God!

O Lord, if we fail to speak, fail not you to speak. And if we know not how to bear your burden, or express your amazing thoughts, yet speak you with that all-constraining silent voice which well-trained ears can hear, and make your servants obedient to you now, for Christ's sake!

*“Awake, Thou Spirit, who of old
Didst fire the watchman of the church's youth,
Who faced the foe, unshrinking, bold,
Who witness'd day and night the eternal truth,
Whose voices through the world are ringing still,
And bringing hosts to know and do Thy will.
Oh, that Thy fire were kindled soon,
That swift from land to land its flame might leap!
Lord, give us but this priceless boon
Of faithful servants, fit for Thee to reap.
The harvest of the soul; look down and view
How great the harvest, yet the laborers few.
Oh, haste to help ere we are lost!
Send forth evangelists, in spirit strong,
Arm'd with Thy Word, a dauntless host,
Bold to attack the rule of ancient wrong;
And let them all the earth for Thee reclaim,
To be Thy kingdom and to know Thy name.”*

Source: internet

Charles Haddon Spurgeon (19 June 1834– 31 January 1892) was an English Particular Baptist preacher. Spurgeon remains highly influential among Christians of various denominations, to some of whom he is known as the "Prince of Preachers". He was a strong figure in the Reformed Baptist tradition, defending the 1689 London Baptist Confession of Faith, and opposing the liberal and pragmatic theological tendencies in the Church of his day. Spurgeon was pastor of the congregation of the New Park Street Chapel (later the Metropolitan Tabernacle) in London for 38 years.



Psalm 18

For the director of music. Of David the servant of the LORD. He sang to the LORD the words of this song when the LORD delivered him from the hand of all his enemies and from the hand of Saul. He said:

- ¹ I love you, LORD, my strength.
² The LORD is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer;
my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge,
my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold.
³ I called to the LORD, who is worthy of praise,
and I have been saved from my enemies.
⁴ The cords of death entangled me;
the torrents of destruction overwhelmed me.
⁵ The cords of the grave coiled around me;
the snares of death confronted me.
⁶ In my distress I called to the LORD;
I cried to my God for help.
From his temple he heard my voice;
my cry came before him, into his ears.
⁷ The earth trembled and quaked,
and the foundations of the mountains shook;
they trembled because he was angry.
⁸ Smoke rose from his nostrils;
consuming fire came from his mouth,
burning coals blazed out of it.
⁹ He parted the heavens and came down;
dark clouds were under his feet.
¹⁰ He mounted the cherubim and flew;
he soared on the wings of the wind.
¹¹ He made darkness his covering, his canopy around him—
the dark rain clouds of the sky.
¹² Out of the brightness of his presence clouds advanced,
with hailstones and bolts of lightning.
¹³ The LORD thundered from heaven;
the voice of the Most High resounded.
¹⁴ He shot his arrows and scattered the enemy,
with great bolts of lightning he routed them.
¹⁵ The valleys of the sea were exposed
and the foundations of the earth laid bare

at your rebuke, LORD,
at the blast of breath from your nostrils.
¹⁶ He reached down from on high and took hold of me;
he drew me out of deep waters.
¹⁷ He rescued me from my powerful enemy,
from my foes, who were too strong for me.
¹⁸ They confronted me in the day of my disaster,
but the LORD was my support.
¹⁹ He brought me out into a spacious place;
he rescued me because he delighted in me.



Psalm 18 – Part 2

- ²⁰ The LORD has dealt with me according to my righteousness;
according to the cleanness of my hands he has rewarded me.
- ²¹ For I have kept the ways of the LORD;
I am not guilty of turning from my God.
- ²² All his laws are before me;
I have not turned away from his decrees.
- ²³ I have been blameless before him
and have kept myself from sin.
- ²⁴ The LORD has rewarded me according to my righteousness,
according to the cleanness of my hands in his sight.
- ²⁵ To the faithful you show yourself faithful,
to the blameless you show yourself blameless,
- ²⁶ to the pure you show yourself pure,
but to the devious you show yourself shrewd.
- ²⁷ You save the humble
but bring low those whose eyes are haughty.
- ²⁸ You, LORD, keep my lamp burning;
my God turns my darkness into light.
- ²⁹ With your help I can advance against a troop;
with my God I can scale a wall.
- ³⁰ As for God, his way is perfect:
The LORD's word is flawless;
he shields all who take refuge in him.
- ³¹ For who is God besides the LORD?
And who is the Rock except our God?
- ³² It is God who arms me with strength
and keeps my way secure.
- ³³ He makes my feet like the feet of a deer;
he causes me to stand on the heights.
- ³⁴ He trains my hands for battle;
my arms can bend a bow of bronze.
- ³⁵ You make your saving help my shield,
and your right hand sustains me;
your help has made me great.
- ³⁶ You provide a broad path for my feet,
so that my ankles do not give way.
- ³⁷ I pursued my enemies and overtook them;
I did not turn back till they were destroyed.
- ³⁸ I crushed them so that they could not rise;

they fell beneath my feet.
³⁹ You armed me with strength for battle;
you humbled my adversaries before me.
⁴⁰ You made my enemies turn their backs in flight,
and I destroyed my foes.
⁴¹ They cried for help, but there was no one to save them—
to the LORD, but he did not answer.
⁴² I beat them as fine as windblown dust;
I trampled them like mud in the streets.
⁴³ You have delivered me from the attacks of the people;
you have made me the head of nations.
People I did not know now serve me,
⁴⁴ foreigners cower before me;
as soon as they hear of me, they obey me.
⁴⁵ They all lose heart;
they come trembling from their strongholds.
⁴⁶ The LORD lives! Praise be to my Rock!
Exalted be God my Savior!
⁴⁷ He is the God who avenges me,
who subdues nations under me,
⁴⁸ who saves me from my enemies.
You exalted me above my foes;
from a violent man you rescued me.
⁴⁹ Therefore I will praise you, LORD, among the nations;
I will sing the praises of your name.
⁵⁰ He gives his king great victories;
he shows unfailing love to his anointed,
to David and to his descendants forever.



What's in your stable?

What is the strangest sporting event you've come across?

Last week, I was introduced to the annual Hobby Horse competition in Finland – the sport is so big that they've even made a movie about it. People fly from abroad to compete. Scores are kept. Prizes are won. When I told Elizabeth about the event, she said "You should enter."

"Why?"

"You'd win."

"It's not *that* sort of Hobby Horse!"

But yes, I agree, she has a point.

I suppose Hobbyhorsing is no stranger than the fact that the parking lot at my local mall is full of cars belonging to people who've come to the gym to ride on stationary bicycles.

From the perspective of cultures outside of our own, many of our sports must seem crazy and arbitrary. Imagine the consternation of the visiting Martian, who learns that our most celebrated citizens are not those labouring to cure us of cancer, but those who spend their time chasing balls.

"So I do not run aimlessly; I do not box as one beating the air." 1 Corinthians 9:26

From the perspective of the Martian, I suspect that it would appear that we have our priorities seriously inverted.

What of the perspective of eternity? How many of our activities will seem like Hobbyhorsing – in both senses of that word?

Leisure, play and relaxation are vital components of our lives, which would be dreadfully dull and dreary without them, but what of the times when we keep ourselves busy riding Hobbyhorses?

Consider an audit of your activities. Is there anything there that looks like a Hobby Horse? Maybe it's time to put it in back in the stable and to bolt the door. There are loads of real horses waiting for you [Jeremiah 29:11].

Why not learn to ride them?

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.



Truth

John 18:36-38 ³⁶ Jesus said, “My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jewish leaders. But now my kingdom is from another place.”³⁷ “You are a king, then!” said Pilate. Jesus answered, “You say that I am a king. In fact, the reason I was born and came into the world is to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me.”³⁸ “What is truth?” retorted Pilate. With this he went out again to the Jews gathered there and said, “I find no basis for a charge against him.

“What is truth?” This particular question seems very relevant today. Perhaps the easier question is to ask, “What is untruth?” I am afraid that truth doesn’t seem to be based on hard facts so much as beliefs. Untruths are often those facts that don’t agree with my opinions. Perhaps that is why we have not been so discerning in picking out false news items or indeed in being able to distinguish opinion from fact. Here was Pilate, the judge in a court of law, struggling with truth. What a pity he didn’t hang around to find out the answer to his question. I suspect it was rhetorical; he already knew the answer and rushed out to confirm that Jesus was innocent.

Still, I would like to have known what Jesus would have answered. Would he have said as he did to the disciples “I am”? Or would he have thrown the question back to Pilate as He so often did with non-believers. I think what Pilate was really saying to Jesus was that life is not black and white, particularly for a ruler or politician. There are a lot of grey areas. That was the dilemma that Pilate found himself in. Actually, his judgement was not about the truth but rather what was the best way forward that would preserve his position and not cause a riot. If you’d asked Pilate he might have said that truth had to be sacrificed for the greater good. Not the first or the last politician to have thought that.

Jesus was much clearer he had come into the world to testify to the truth. “The truth” what is that? Well, it has to be related to the kingdom of God and what they had previously been discussing. The truth for Jesus is not an opinion or a side. It is not about being right and everyone else wrong, it is the deep reality that Jesus is the Son of God (I am), truth incarnate, who came into the world to bring us back to God.

Truth as a kingdom concept is rooted in God’s ways and values. To learn more about truth we need to listen to Jesus and be filled, as He was, with grace and truth.

+ June Nash – UK - June worked many decades long for TLM as missionary, trainer and director. She is fondly remembered and missed by the wide TLM Family.



I thirst

John 19,28

Mother Teresa recalled that it was on a train journey to Darjeeling, on September 10, 1946, that she received a second vocation within religious life, “a vocation to give up even Loreto where I was very happy and to go out in the streets to serve the poorest of the poor.” In 1928 she had left her home in Albania to join the Sisters of Loreto in Ireland who, at her request, assigned her to teach in India. She felt an overwhelming desire not just to teach the poor in school and then send them home but also to go live among them and experience herself the poverty in which they lived. September 10 is observed as “Inspiration Day,” the true beginning of the Missionaries of Charity Mother Teresa was eventually allowed to found.

The mystical experience on the train placed her on Calvary with Jesus at the very moment he cried out, “I thirst.” She explained it this way to the Missionaries of Charity:

“I thirst”. Jesus said on the cross when Jesus was deprived of every consolation, dying in absolute poverty, left alone, despised and broken in body and soul. He spoke of thirst – not for water- but for love, for sacrifice.

Jesus is God. Therefore his love, his thirst is infinite. Our aim is to quench this infinite thirst of a God made man. Just like the adoring angels in Heaven, ceaselessly sing the praises of God, so the Sisters, using the four vows of absolute poverty, charity, obedience, and charity towards the poor, ceaselessly quench the thirsting God by their love and of the love of the souls they bring to him.”

Mother Teresa once summarized her life this way: “By blood, I am an Albanian. By citizenship, an Indian. By faith I am a Roman Catholic nun. I belong entirely to the heart of Jesus.”

Mother Teresa of Kolkata



Three steps in ministry

1. Keep watch over yourselves
2. and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers.
3. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood. *Acts 20,28*

**Today remember to take care of yourself!
Sometimes you get so busy taking care of others that
you forget that you are important, too.**

Reflect and think about how you are going to do it!

Authors in ABC Order**Country****Textuaries in Canonical Order**

<i>Charles Spurgeon</i>	<i>24, 25 August</i>	<i>UK</i>		2 Sam 24,24	17 August
<i>Dan Izzett</i>	<i>4, 21, 22 August</i>	<i>Zimbabwe/UK</i>		Psalm 12	5 August
<i>David Beazley</i>	<i>8 August</i>	<i>UK</i>		Psalm 13	6 August
<i>David king of Israel</i>	<i>5, 6, 12, 13, 19, 20 August</i>	<i>Israel</i>		Psalm 14	12 August
<i>+Eddie Askew</i>	<i>10 August</i>	<i>UK</i>		Psalm 15	13 August
<i>Elfan Cadson Soffian Lantakay</i>	<i>16 August</i>	<i>Timor Leste</i>		Psalm 16	19 August
<i>Élie Fofolo</i>	<i>11 August</i>	<i>DR Congo</i>		Psalm 17	20 August
<i>Jo-Anne Thomson</i>	<i>18 August</i>	<i>UK</i>		Psalm 18	26, 27 August
<i>Johan Velema Dr</i>	<i>9 August</i>	<i>Netherlands</i>		Psalm 130, 5-6	9 August
<i>John Twynam-Perkins</i>	<i>2 August</i>	<i>Scotland</i>		Isaiah 43,1/b	8 August
<i>Judith Merrell</i>	<i>23 August</i>	<i>UK</i>		Matthew 6,33	16 August
<i>+June Nash</i>	<i>29 August</i>	<i>UK</i>		Matthew 8,1-4	14 August
<i>Mother Teresa of Kolkata</i>	<i>30 August</i>	<i>Albania/India</i>		Matthew 10,7-8	4 August
<i>Otto Kingsley</i>	<i>7 August</i>	<i>Southern Afrcia</i>		Matthew 14,22-33	3 August
<i>Peter Laubscher</i>	<i>28 August</i>	<i>Southern Africa</i>		Matthew 28,18-19	24,25 August
<i>Pierina Dsouza</i>	<i>3 August</i>	<i>Switzerland</i>		Mark 1,22	2 August
<i>Pradeep and Sarah Failbus</i>	<i>14 August</i>	<i>India</i>		Luke 3,5-6	10 August
<i>Raju PLN Dr</i>	<i>15 August</i>	<i>India</i>		John 14,6	21 August
<i>Silvano Perotti</i>	<i>17 August</i>	<i>Switzerland</i>		John 15,16	11 August
				John 18,36-38	29 August
				John 19,28	30 August
				Acts 2,42-47	18 August
				Acts 20,28	31 August
				1 Cor 9,26	28 August
				Philippians 4,8	23 August
				Hebrews 4,16	22 August