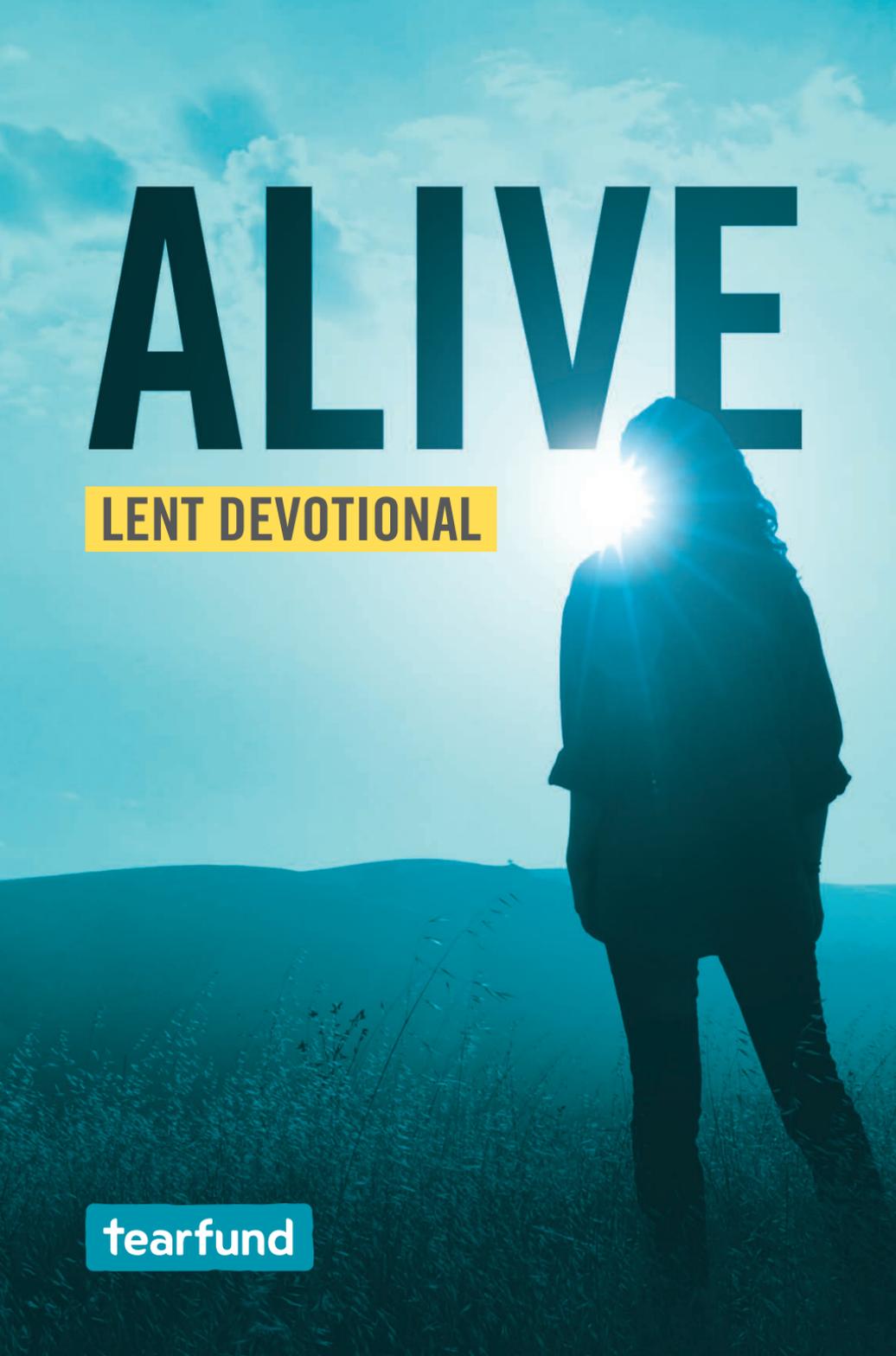


ALIVE

A person is shown in silhouette, standing in a field of tall grass. They are looking towards a bright sun that is low on the horizon, creating a lens flare effect. The sky is a deep blue with some light clouds. The overall mood is contemplative and hopeful.

LENT DEVOTIONAL

tearfund

tearfund

**WE ARE CHRISTIANS,
PASSIONATE ABOUT
ENDING POVERTY,
FOLLOWING JESUS WHERE
THE NEED IS GREATEST.**

Tearfund works with churches and Christian agencies, in the poorest regions of the world, to help people in crisis and lift communities out of poverty.



THE POOR ARE PRECIOUS TO GOD

Poverty is a result of the world's brokenness and ruptured relationships with God, between people, and with creation. We fight suffering and despair because every person bears God's image and is loved by Him.



WE FOLLOW JESUS

By His example and His words, Jesus calls us to serve those most deeply hurt by the brokenness of the world. We follow Jesus to where the need is greatest so we can serve in the centre of God's calling.



GOD USES THE CHURCH TO TRANSFORM LIVES

God will someday restore creation and reconcile people to Himself. We empower the church today to declare the presence of God through transformed lives, restored families, reconciled communities, and renewed futures.

POVERTY IS NOT GOD'S PLAN FOR HIS KINGDOM

Today, **1 in 9 people** are trapped in extreme poverty.

Poverty causes people to starve. It forces them to sell their most treasured possessions. It steals their dignity. It lies and insists they don't matter.

But God is building His Kingdom, and we know poverty and injustice won't have the last word.

Local churches, in the poorest places, are eager to follow God and meet the intense physical, emotional, and spiritual poverty around them. They strive to be 'salt and light' in their villages. But the challenges they face are immense. Following Jesus, He's calling us help them.

Through bible classes and practical training, Tearfund has equipped and empowered thousands of African & Asian churches to lift millions of people out of extreme poverty. The result? The hungry are fed, children go to school, and entire communities are permanently and radically transformed in the name of Jesus.



God is building his Kingdom.
Amazingly, he's invited us to join in.

CHURCH-BASED COMMUNITY TRANSFORMATION: THE PROCESS

STEP 1

VISIONING

- Church leaders in Africa and Asia participate in biblical workshops to learn about holistic mission
- They learn about the God-given skills and resources they already have
- They discover how to identify needs and create plans to tackle poverty in their community

The way Tearfund helps the poor with local churches is brilliant and right there with what we would hope to happen with Christian mission.

-Ellerslie Road Baptist Church

STEP 2

EQUIPPING

Local churches and individuals acquire practical and simple training they can use to lift them and their families out of poverty. We provide:

1. Training in **simple** and **efficient agriculture methods** – helping farmers grow 2-3 times more food
2. **Village Savings Groups** to provide families a way to save and obtain loans
3. **Financial literacy and business training** to dramatically increase household income
4. **Relationship and trauma counselling** to heal deep emotional and spiritual scars
5. **Emergency aid** in times of disaster

By unlocking a person's God-given potential, we believe they can escape poverty for good.

STEP 3

TRANSFORMING

- Churches go out and engage their communities; equipped and excited to meet **physical and spiritual needs**
- They empower people, restore relationships, and work to overcome poverty
- The church brings **new life** to the community and people within it
- **God is glorified**

JOIN GOD'S AMAZING WORK IN THE WORLD

God is building His Kingdom. **Will you join Him?**

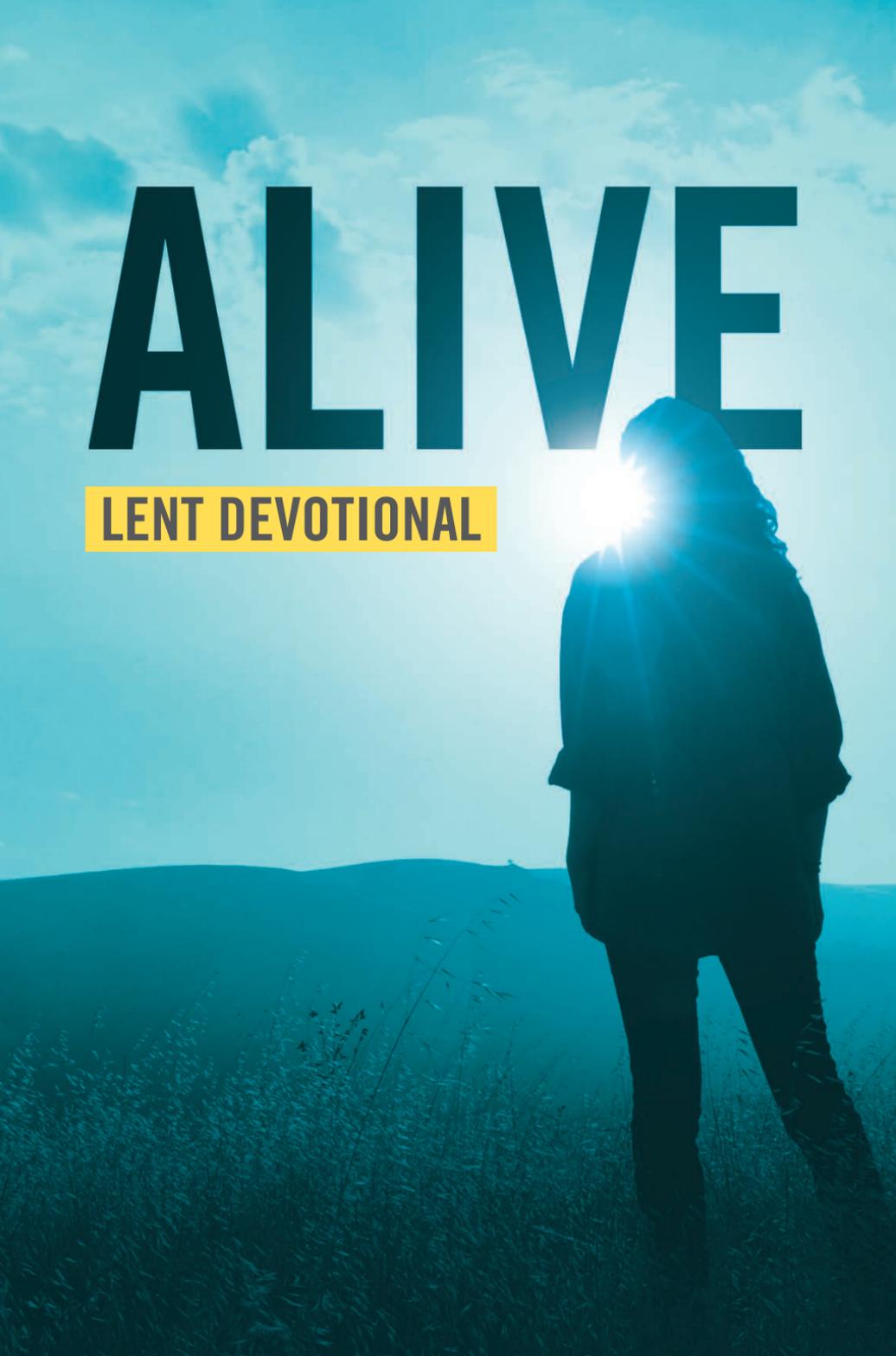
We have a vision to empower and equip 5,000 congregations over the next 5 years – lifting millions out of physical and spiritual poverty.

For only **\$29/month**, you can equip 1 church and empower **over 100 people to escape poverty in the first year.**

DONATE TODAY: www.tearfund.ca/donate

ALIVE

LENT DEVOTIONAL



Welcome to Alive.

'The glory of God is a human being, fully alive.'
– Saint Irenaeus of Lyons

I begin each Lent by asking myself the same question: am I living the abundant life that Jesus offers? And, just as importantly, am I helping others to do the same?

It isn't easy. The world is full of noise and distraction – bright lights that lead us away from the depth of life, keeping us in the shallows.

My prayer is that this devotional helps you to dive back in.

The kingdom of heaven – the kingdom of life and love and joy – is closer than we think. Let us grasp it with both hands.

Gideon Heugh
Editor

Unless otherwise stated, all Bible quotations are NIV..

WEEK ONE:

LET THERE BE LIGHT

Being alive to our potential

'The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.' (John 1:5)



'So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.'

(Genesis 1:27 NRSV)

To know where we are, and to know where we are going, we need to know where we began. Too often, we forget our true origin; we forget that the story of humanity did not begin with the fall.

Our story started with the image of God.

Beauty. Wonder. Life. This is what God has placed at the core of our being. Nothing can change our identity as children of God, declared so emphatically at the cross. Sin is a stain upon the fabric; it is not the fabric itself.

We were made for good and, despite the fall, we retain that shining potential.

The fullness of life that Christ offers us isn't about running away from our humanity, it's about running back into it – it's about reconnecting with who we were created to be.

Father God,

This Lent, reconnect us with your divine vision. Thank you for making us in your likeness. Help us to see the divine image in both ourselves and in others. Amen.

Gideon Heugh

Gideon is a poet and coffee lover, and has been working for Tearfund since 2015.

'I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well.'

(Psalm 139:14)

What did Jesus mean when he said 'life in all its fullness'? We can find the answer in Jesus himself. Not only in what he said, but in who he was. Jesus was a human being. Fully God, yes, but also fully *us*.

God coming into the world in human form was an affirmation that creation – physical, tangible, messy creation – is good. Very good. And that includes you.

Jesus was not just a revelation of God; he was a revelation of humanity at its most human. To grow into the likeness of Christ, therefore, is to uncover who we truly are made to be.

Life in all its fullness isn't about becoming less like you; it's about becoming more like the you that God made – whoever and wherever you are. It's about repairing the brokenness, stripping away the labels that society places upon us, and letting the Spirit uncover the divine image within us.

Lord God,

Thank you that you did not distance yourself from humanity, but entered into the very heart of it. Help us to see the worth that you have placed in us, and embrace the life you offer. Amen.

Rachael Adams

Rachael is a youth mentor, and writes for Tearfund and others.

'The kingdom of God
is in your midst.'

LUKE 17:21



'Nor will people say, "Here it is," or "There it is," because the kingdom of God is in your midst.' (Luke 17:21)

How does God's rule come about on Earth? The Pharisees of Jesus' day would have insisted this was a matter for God to determine. Our place was to wait passively for it to happen. The best we could do was to look out for signs of its arrival.

Jesus presented things differently. He brought God's presence, power and authority into human affairs in a dynamic way, so all that is hostile to the thriving of creation is ultimately overcome.

However, by describing the kingdom as 'in your midst', Jesus suggests we have a part to play. The phrase he uses might be better translated 'within your grasp'.

As we accept God's invitation to be his hands and feet, we help to bring about the healing of his creation, and his rule is made manifest.

*Lord Jesus Christ,
In your coming to Earth you made known to us the reality of God's kingdom. Give us courage to lay hold of the power and authority you have entrusted to us, and to partner with you in revealing your rule on Earth as in heaven. Amen.*

Ian Parkinson

*Ian works for the Church Pastoral Aid Society,
and is on the leadership team at New Wine.*

'And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light.' (Genesis 1:3)

*God of radiance, source of all light:
Let there be light in my eyes,
so I can see the truth more clearly;
Let there be light in my mind,
so I can know your goodness more closely;
Let there be light in my heart,
so I can love this world more fiercely;
Let there be light in my body,
so I can experience your creation more fully;
Let there be light in my soul,
so I can follow your path more freely;
Let there be light in my community,
so we can accept each other more openly;
Let there be light in the church,
so we can do your will more obediently;
Let there be light in my country,
so we can live more peacefully;
Let there be light in the world,
so all can have life more abundantly.*

In Jesus' name, amen.

'Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.'
(John 1:12)

In Jewish culture, as well as others, a person's societal status was (and is) directly related to their lineage. It determines where they live, the occupation they pursue, and the opportunities available to them.

As God's chosen people, the Israelites thought they had exclusive access to God. His promises and blessings were because of their lineage as descendants of Abraham. Anyone else was seen as a gentile or – as one without the promise.

They observed many customs which distinguished them from surrounding nations as God's chosen people. The act of observing those customs was not what made them God's people. Instead, it was the outward reflection of that God had chosen them.

Amazingly, God has done the same for us through His own will and sacrifice of Jesus Christ. This new covenant is not only with the descendants of one man – but to the whole world! The only criteria for this covenant is to receive Jesus as the Messiah, and believe in his name (as the Son of God). Anyone who receives and believes in Jesus is given the right to become a child of God.

What an incredible thought! That we can be children of God and have access to all His protection, provision, and inheritance. Let us never forget the great hope we have in Him.

Jane Ekuban

*Jane works as the Donor Services Coordinator for
Tearfund Canada*

WEEK TWO:

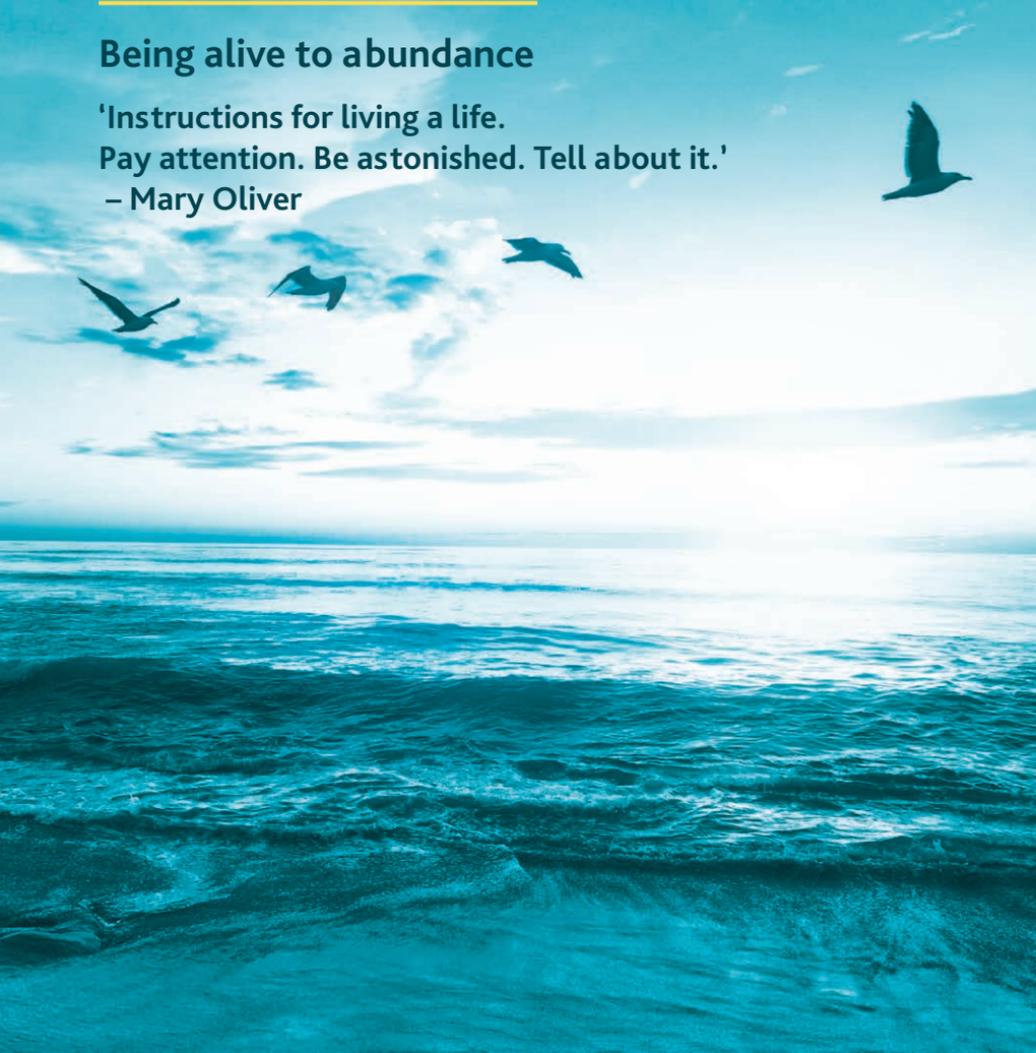
LET THERE BE LIFE

Being alive to abundance

'Instructions for living a life.

Pay attention. Be astonished. Tell about it.'

– Mary Oliver



"Do not run until your feet are bare and your throat is dry. But you said, 'It's no use! I love foreign gods, and I must go after them.'" (Jeremiah 2:25)

Perfectionism. Busyness. People pleasing. These are the 'alien gods' I find myself clinging to. A constant need to succeed and impress informs my decisions, lifestyle and relationships. While indulging these 'gods' can bring a short-lived buzz, ultimately they leave me feeling drained, disconnected and lifeless.

The Lord's call to 'slow down' is welcome. In slowness there is time to check in with ourselves, those around us and God. To ask if our lifestyles are sustainable – for our own mental health, the good of our relationships and the future of creation.

Slowing down forces me to consider if I am living well. The creator invites me into an abundance which is about more than personal achievements. It is a life of connection: with people, with planet and the one who breathes hope into my being.

Creator God,

Release me from my obsessions with busyness and perfectionism – or anything that takes up too much room in my life. Teach me, Lord, how to live well on this Earth and care for all you have made. Bring abundance of life to all, and help me to give energy and hope to those I encounter. Amen.

Katherine Maxwell-Rose

Katherine is a writer, speaker and activist.

'For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities – his eternal power and divine nature – have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made.' (Romans 1:20)

Gazing into a starlit sky, it's easy to be overwhelmed with awe and amazement. The splendor of light that no human hand can recreate or conceive. It is almost as if God is shouting at women and men to look deeply and know the reality of the majestic! The Psalmist summed it up in saying, "the heavens declare the glory of God!"

As much as God's glory is seen in the heavens, it can also be seen in the small things of life that surround us every day! A falling snowflake, a blade of grass, a growing plant, the human body, and even the annoying squirrel. Sometimes we miss the glory of God in the insignificant and commonplace things. The familiar can easily be taken for granted and passed over.

During Lent, how can I slow down and clearly see God's sovereignty and divine nature in all things? For the things around me reveal a God of beauty, intricacy, order, creativity, and power.

*Dear God,
help me to slow down and see you in all things. The beauty of what you have made speaks to me in a new and fresh way. You are not only far away, but you are right here with me today. I receive again the gift of your creation and through it, I am pointed to your love shown in Jesus Christ! Amen.*

Don Miller

Don is Tearfund Canada's Director of Church Partnerships

'In repentance and rest is your salvation, in quietness and trust is your strength.' (Isaiah 30:15)

Tearfund is committed to justice and eradicating extreme poverty, and we believe this is the call of the wider church. To see this brought about, we need to do things that make a difference. Change comes through taking action.

Yet the quest for justice can also be driven by restlessness. Sometimes it is fuelled by a need to keep busy. When we're driven by busyness, deeper reflection and listening carefully to others can be crowded out. Worst of all, it can consume all the time and space we need to hear God and be guided by the Holy Spirit. So Isaiah's reminder is much needed.

Our salvation is in repentance and rest; our strength is in quietness and trust, for these are the qualities we need to draw close to God. God meets us most powerfully in the stillness of our hearts, in the very centre of our being, for there we are most truly ourselves.

Lord,

May we always be open to you in our innermost being, so that our 'doing' is always guided by your will and not by our needs. Please help us to keep our identity so rooted in you, that everything we are and do, reflects more of your wisdom and love. Amen.

Dr Elaine Storkey

Elaine is a philosopher, sociologist, and theologian, and sits on Tearfund's Theology committee.

'They feast in the abundance of your house; you give them drink from your river of delights. For with you is the fountain of life; in your light we see light.' (Psalm 36:8-9)

What sort of universe is this? Is it a place of scarcity, or a place of abundance? The way you answer that question will, whether you realise it or not, govern the way you live.

In a universe of scarcity, there isn't enough to go around. In this universe, people hold tightly to their possessions. If someone else is blessed, that might be taking away from your blessing.

But that isn't the universe we live in, because our God is a God of abundance. A God who is infinite, generous, full of grace. There is more than enough to go around. We can hold things lightly, give things freely.

However, due to the unjust systems governing our world, not all have access to this abundance. Our job – as Tearfund, as Christians, as the church – is to ensure that all people do.

Dear God,

Thank you for the abundance of the universe you have created.

Thank you for the provision of the Earth. Help us to create a more just world, so that not one person has to go without. Amen.

'They feast in the
abundance of your house.'

PSALM 36:8



'I know that there is nothing better for people than to be happy and to do good while they live. That each of them may eat and drink, and find satisfaction in all their toil – this is the gift of God.' (Ecclesiastes 3:12-13)

I am challenged by the idea that God's gift to humanity is to eat, drink, and find satisfaction in our work. Is this the key to happiness and doing good while we live, that our toil not only provides us with sustenance but with deep satisfaction, perhaps even joy?

Much of our western world views work as a necessary burden we bear to enjoy our weekends and holidays. And yet in creation, our God "worked" for six days and "rested" on the seventh. Are we to assume he was miserable in his toil, longing for a Sabbath day of rest? Did God count down the days until his vacation? Of course not! There was "satisfaction" in his labor and profound love in his heart for his creation. It was good!

I don't want to miss God's teaching here. In everything I do, I'm to reflect the image of God. The real gift of our toil is that through it, we have the opportunity to worship God when we find satisfaction both in our work and *how* we work.

Dear Lord, may I see my labor/toil/work today as an act of worship, creating space for you to work in and through me. Thank you for these gifts. Amen

Arden Gustafson

Arden is a Board Member of Tearfund Canada and Pastor of Norquay Evangelical Covenant Church

'God saw all that he had made, and it was very good.'
(Genesis 1:31)

A Celtic prayer for creation:

*There is no plant in the ground but tells of your beauty, O Christ.
There is no life in the sea but proclaims your goodness.
There is no bird on the wing, there is no star in the sky, there is
nothing beneath the sun but is full of your blessing.
Lighten my understanding of your presence all around, O Christ.
Kindle my will to be caring for creation.*

*You are above me O God; You are beneath;
You are in air; You are in earth;
You are beside me; You are within.
O God of heaven, you have made your home on earth in the broken
body of creation.
Kindle within me a love for you in all things.*

Amen.

John Philip Newell

*John is a poet, scholar and teacher, and is a former Warden
of Iona Abbey.*

'But ask the animals, and they will teach you, or the birds in the sky, and they will tell you; or speak to the earth, and it will teach you, or let the fish in the sea inform you.' (Job 12:7-8)

The silence of the trees

There is a grace
that we cannot remember,
a peace that has passed
our understanding.

For who cares to listen
to the silence of the trees?
Who ventures out into the quiet
of their own soul?

Who in this age of deafening hurry
can find that gentle answer
hidden so wisely
in the heart of a spring flower?

WEEK THREE:

LET THERE BE JOY

Being alive to ourselves

'Find out where the joy resides, and give it a voice far beyond singing. For to miss the joy is to miss all.' – Robert Louis Stevenson



'He has filled him with the Spirit of God, with wisdom, with understanding, with knowledge and with all kinds of skills – to make artistic designs for work in gold, silver and bronze.' (Exodus 35:31-32)

Framed in my bedroom there is a precious picture. It's a drawing of 'mom and dad' done by our daughter when she was a toddler. In her babyish hand, when she could barely hold a pencil, somehow she captured so much of what we were like. My husband's moustache and glasses, my spiky hair and love of striped jumpers leap from the frame in their freshness.

And the truth is, our creator God made us to create. And I thank God he has invested all people around the world with his creativity and the joy of being co-creators with him. With so much beauty in our world, there is much to inspire us.

So next time, why not have a go? Draw a picture. Write a poem. Cook a delicious meal. Make something new. And I pray that our Lord Jesus will fill you with his creativity!

Lord God,

We thank you for our beautiful world, expressed in art and design.

We pray for all those who work in creative industries; may your blessed Spirit always be their inspiration. Amen.

Rev Virginia Lockett

Virginia leads Tearfund's UK Churches team, and is a vicar in Dorset.

'But godliness with contentment is great gain.' (1 Timothy 6:6)

One of the sayings I've heard time and time again is 'live your best life.' Yet it's just another way that our culture implies that this life is everything we have – and what it provides isn't enough.

Is life all about doing more, working more, buying more, travelling more, getting more? Perhaps it is, if there isn't anything beyond the grave. It's a good way to end up with a hyper-anxious society.

But we know that there is much more to this life than the here and now. We know that our best life will never be here, but in the life to come. Our goal shouldn't be to accumulate earthly treasures, but to build up treasures in heaven – treasures that will never rust or rot.

Our society's obsession with outward success, with constantly striving for more, is bad for the soul. If you want something to strive for, make it kindness and a desire to see God's justice and love enacted in the world.

Dear God,

Help me to see that what I have – and who I am – is enough. Thank you that you love me unconditionally; help me, Lord, to do the same for myself and for others. Amen.

Matthew Schroeder

*Matthew is the Marketing & Communications Manager
at Tearfund Canada.*

'Unless you change and
become like little children,
you will never enter the
kingdom of heaven.'

MATTHEW 18:3



'And he said: 'Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.'
(Matthew 18:3)

When he was born two years ago, along with the cutest little dimples and his daddy's big blue eyes, my son brought with him two gifts which stand out as I reflect on this passage. Imagination: a stick becomes a hedge cutter, a pineapple, a guitar (and why not?). He spends hours getting lost as he connects with God's world in new, imaginative ways.

And laughter. My favourite sound in the world is my son's laugh, as it echoes around the house, instantly warming every one of its corners. Tickles, bowls as hats, a bedtime game of peekaboo... these things that cause the sparkle in his eyes to spill over into an explosion of giggles.

The author Charlie Mackesy says, 'I wish there was a school of unlearning.' I wish I could unlearn all that has made me not laugh and imagine in the way that all children do.

*Heavenly Father,
Allow us to marvel at the world you have created – to laugh,
even – as we delight in the works of your hands. Help us to wonder
at the simple gifts you have brought to our lives; to
come to you as children, full of unbridled faith, safe, known
and loved by you. Amen.*

Gemma Brown

*Gemma works for the Communications team at Tearfund
Northern Ireland.*

'Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters.' (Colossians 3:23)

In my experience, Christians can get a little too obsessed over the idea of 'calling'. We can drive ourselves to distraction by constantly wondering what God's purpose is for our lives.

What we often forget is that we already know what God's purpose for our lives is. To love our God and our neighbours, to act with justice, love, and mercy. To reject evil and pursue righteousness.

If we follow these commands, God will show us where He wants us to go in his right timing. Are we following him in the little things?

Another reality is that God has given us all dreams, ideas, and passions. These are good things and we have them for a reason. The things that inspire us, the things that make us come alive – these are imprints of God.

Sometimes it is important just to act instead of perpetually waiting. When we start walking is when God can guide us down the correct path. When we go after whatever it is that moves us most, we'll probably find that God is already there, waiting for us.

*Lord,
Thank you for the passions you have given me, for the dreams you have placed in my heart. Help me to see where you are working so that I can enter into your work. Amen.*

'So I commend the enjoyment of life, because there is nothing better for a person under the sun than to eat and drink and be glad. Then joy will accompany them in their toil.'
(Ecclesiastes 8:15)

It was for freedom that Christ set us free...

Are we truly embracing that freedom? Or are we letting the (very real) cares of life make us grow cynical? Life is not life if it is merely a crawl towards an end – and that the only joy and hope is beyond it.

What was Christ's victory if not that we might have abundance in this life as well as the eternal one? Part of our calling is to help bring heaven to Earth. The kingdom ought to be a place of joy; on more than one occasion, Jesus describes it using the metaphor of a feast.

Trials will come. The world is still broken, and we cannot avoid pain in our lives. But let us not be sold the lie that our well-being does not matter. This life that God has given us is to be lived. To 'eat and drink and be glad' is itself an act of worship.

*Our Father,
Who reached down from heaven with such love – may we not miss the joy in the gift of our living. May our hearts find gladness in the days you have given us. May we grasp with open hands the opportunities for life abundant that you give to us. Amen.*

Tarryn Pegna

Tarryn is a writer in Tearfund's Brand and Communications team.

'May the God of hope fill
you with all joy and peace.'

ROMANS 15:13



Photo: Tom Price/Tearfund

'May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.' (Romans 15:13)

Happiness is a feeling; joy is a decision. So, let us decide.

Dear God,

When I am among the people whom I love – let there be joy;

When I spend time in silence and solitude – let there be joy;

When I go about my daily business – let there be joy;

When the sorrows of life weigh me down – let there be joy;

When circumstances do not go my way – let there be joy;

When I cannot see the path ahead of me – let there be joy;

Among the highs and the lows, the weakness and the strength,

In every season of life O Lord – let there be joy.

Amen.

'I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well.'

(Psalm 139:14)

Have you ever stopped to ponder just how amazing the human body is? Though I do not claim to know very much about the science behind how it all works, it's mind-blowing to me that our bodies have the capacity to heal and restore after sickness or injury. All the technology in the world cannot replicate the intricacies and creativity of the human body! I believe it gives us a pretty fantastic glimpse into the awesomeness of our God.

What I love about this verse is that it is written in such a way that although the author sees their worth and incredible value, they do not take any sort of pride in it. David acknowledges that "[God's] works are wonderful," pointing us to the creativity and goodness of our Creator God. He should be praised for the works He does and we get the undeserved gift of knowing and seeing His works. We get to know "full well" the works of God as He works through us and in us to accomplish His purposes.

Do you recognize the wonderful works that God is doing in you and through you? My prayer is that you would come into a new understanding of how God is working and has worked so that you can claim, like David, that you know "full well" just how wonderful God is.

Andrea Sherk

*Andrea is the Development and Donor Relations
Coordinator at Tearfund Canada*

WEEK FOUR:

LET THERE BE LOVE

Being alive to each other

'God's dream is that you and I and all of us will realise that we are family, that we are made for togetherness, for goodness, and for compassion.'

– Desmond Tutu



'Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth.' (1 John 3:18)

My family were immediately sceptical when I encountered God and began going to church.

I'd just returned from studying in America. Baptised. Raring to go. 'Make disciples of all nations' was an anthem burning in my heart. How could I make my family see this awesome God I had given my life to? To know Jesus, like I did – as friend, mentor and saviour?

My words weren't making a difference. Conversations were shot down. Invitations to church sank like lead balloons. But what if I told you now that my mom regularly asks me to pray? That my family witnessed my sister and niece healed by prayers from my small group? That the family shop always includes tins for the church-run food bank?

Yes, this was all God. But how did it happen? I let go of wanting them to be a certain way and saw them as they are, loving them where they were at.

*Lord Jesus,
Let me see the person before me as you see them. Show me how
I can respond to their needs. And let your name be glorified in
everything I do. Amen.*



LENT
APPEAL

Tearfund has launched an appeal this Lent to help empower and enrich the lives of more people living in poverty. We need your help if we are to continue following Jesus where the need is greatest. If you feel led to give, or to find out more, please visit www.tearfund.ca/lentappeal

Photo: David Mutua/Tearfund

But he said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.' (2 Corinthians 12:9)

Paul, an apostle of Jesus, is important in the eyes of the people of the church in Corinth. He is their pastor, teacher and famous all over the region. In the Roman Empire, it would have been unusual to be willing to express weakness. Many people today struggle to show any kind of vulnerability. You rise to the top by being strong. But the way of the kingdom is different.

If you or I were faced with difficulty or hardship, our instinct, like Paul's, might be to pray for them to be removed (2 Corinthians 12:8). Paul's prayer was answered, but not in the way he was expecting: 'My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.'

This answered prayer meant that Paul could be honest about his weaknesses, because he was following the way of the cross – even though it looked like foolishness to the world (1 Corinthians 1:18).

Dear God,

Help me to trust you even in weakness. Help me to boast not in my own strength, but only in the cross where defeat is turned to victory and death is turned to life. Amen.

Rev Ben Doolan

Ben leads the church of St Thomas the Martyr, Newcastle.

'Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfil the law of Christ.' (Galatians 6:2)

The idea of self-care has gained a lot of traction in recent years. On the one hand, this is a good thing. As someone who's suffered from mental illness, I know how important self-care is. As part of the recovery process, I had to make sure I looked after myself by praying, exercising plenty and eating well.

However, I wonder if the rise of self-care is symptomatic of a deeper problem: the trend of individualism – the cult of 'do whatever is best for you'. It is interesting that, as these things have grown in our society, so too has loneliness.

A human being cannot thrive in isolation. We're built for relationship. We're made for community. We need each other.

When I was going through the most difficult periods of my life, there's no way I could have done it without the support of friends, family and church. If we truly want to care for ourselves, then the first thing we must do is reach out to others.

*Lord,
Thank you for the gift of relationship and community. For those of us who are lonely, bring the comfort of closeness into our lives. For those of us who are not lonely, help us to see those who are, and help us to reach out to them. Amen.*

'Cursed is anyone who withholds justice from the foreigner, the fatherless or the widow.' (Deuteronomy 27:19)

We live in a world where the vulnerable, dispossessed and disadvantaged are more likely to experience injustice than their prosperous, privileged counterparts. Any society that fails to uphold fair treatment for all falls short of God's expectations.

Who is the foreigner, fatherless or widow from whom justice is withheld in our modern world? They are the economic migrant, the asylum seeker, the victim of sex trafficking, the orphan, the lone parent, the unemployed, the victim of war. I could go on.

What they all have in common, however, is that God knows who they are. He understands their suffering and calls on us, his followers, to stand with them, and to work with them to ensure they get the justice that is rightfully theirs.

*Lord,
You are a just God. You love everyone equally and want everyone to be treated fairly. Let me be an instrument of justice, and not be fearful of calling out injustice when I see it. Amen.*

Marcia Dixon

Marcia is a columnist of Keep The Faith magazine and The Voice newspaper.

'A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side... But a Samaritan, as he travelled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him.' (Luke 10:31-33)

Familiarity can lead to unfamiliarity. I wonder if we've become so familiar with the parable of the Good Samaritan that we've forgotten how shocking it is.

The Samaritans and the Jews hated each other. Their differences were ethnic, religious and geographic. They avoided each other at all costs. Yet Jesus holds up a Samaritan – not someone from his own religion or culture – as the example we need to follow.

God wants us to look beyond the boundaries of our tribes. His command is to love our neighbours; and our neighbours, according to Jesus, must include people who are not like us – people whom we may disagree with or even dislike.

At Tearfund, we reach out to people regardless of race, religion or any other social, cultural or political label. Love is not comfortable; it is not safe; it is not easy. But if we are truly to do the will of God, it is essential.

Dear God,

Help us to see other people as you see them: as masterpieces of your divine hands, worthy of love, dignity and respect. Help us to break down the barriers around us, and to open our hearts to all.

Amen.

'God is love. Whoever lives in love
lives in God, and God in them.'

1 JOHN 4:16



'God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them.'
(1 John 4:16)

Love is the defining characteristic of our new life in Christ. One day we won't require faith or hope, as Paul writes to the Corinthians, but we will forever experience love.

While the greatest commandment is to love God first and wholly (which includes remaining true to His Word), the second is to "love your neighbor as yourself" (Matthew 22:37–39)

Without compromising biblical beliefs, real Christianity is to love every person whom God has placed in our lives — including those living apart from God's guidance — and seek to share the liberating gospel of Christ with them. Along with gospel proclamation, we are called to act in love, kindness and mercy that promotes reconciliation and lifts people out of poverty and brokenness.

"In the twilight of life, God will not judge us on our earthly possessions and human successes, but on how well we have loved." - St. John of the Cross

Kevin Schular

Kevin is the Executive Director of the Baptist General Conference of Canada and Board Chair of Tearfund Canada

**'And now these three remain: faith, hope and love.
But the greatest of these is love.'** (1 Corinthians 13:13)

Love

The ground that hatred has gained
will be retaken by love;
the losses that we've sustained
will be remembered by love;
the tears that we've cried
will be wiped away by love;
the pain and grief inside
will be healed by love;
a world that seems divided
will be remade by love;
this fight is one-sided –
the universe was built by love
and it was made to bring us together;
love is patient, kind, formidable, invincible
and it's the only thing that will last forever.
Not even death can defeat love.
So all of the sorrow and the loneliness,
all of the anger and bitterness
and confusion and brokenness
will be outflanked, outdone,
outmatched and overcome
by love.

WEEK FIVE:

LET THERE BE JUSTICE

Being alive to brokenness

'There are no unsacred places;
there are only sacred places and
desecrated places.'

– Wendell Berry



'The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.' (Genesis 2:15)

My default setting is to question everything. This verse made me ask: why did God put man to work and tend to the garden? Why didn't he create the garden to sustain itself? Better yet, why didn't he create a super-powered entity called 'The Tender' to take care of the garden?

Then I went back again to the beginning, when God created the Earth. With authority, God called things into being and told them what to be, and then took a moment to declare it good. God is deliberate about his plans for us.

Our all-knowing and all-powerful God says my role on Earth is to tend and take care of his garden. This speaks to me of a gifted role in God's plan. Of all the things that he could have declared me to be, this is the one God chose.

Dear God,

You only have good plans for me. Help me do my part and not drop the ball on who you have called me to be. May I be filled with love for you; because to love you is to do your will. Amen.

Ulan Garba Matta

Ulan works with Tearfund in the Jos Green Centre, Nigeria, as part of the Renew Our World campaign.

He who was seated on the throne said, 'I am making everything new!' (Revelation 21:5)

Creation has been under threat since the fall. The Bible tells us the story of how God's relationship with creation was ruptured because of man's desire to be independent from God. Even after this, God in his mercy commenced a plan to redeem creation.

Isaiah prophesied that the environmental destruction caused by war will be no more (Isaiah 2:4); order and shalom will once more exist between animals and humanity (Isaiah 11:6-8). The desert will bloom, and water will gush forth in the wilderness (Isaiah 35:6).

The restoration of creation and humanity is fulfilled in Christ Jesus on the cross. Jesus' reconciliation agenda is all-encompassing, and is fully consolidated by the workings of the Holy Spirit.

Importantly, we worship the God who is not just the creator but the redeemer of all things. The words of Jesus in Revelation 21:5 – 'I am making everything new!' – affirms this truth. Creation is not without hope.

Dear Lord,

Thank you for the refreshing truth of your reconciliation agenda.

May we always acknowledge you as the creator and redeemer of all things; inscribe this truth upon our hearts. Amen.

Fwangmun Oscar Danladi

Fwangmun is the pastor of ECWA Goodnews Church, Nigeria.

'You, Lord, hear the desire of the afflicted; you encourage them, and you listen to their cry, defending the fatherless and the oppressed.' (Psalm 10:17-18)

It's easy to look at the news these days and feel hopeless. The world is on fire, politicians seem more interested in bluster than service, and all the while the poor, marginalised and oppressed are ignored.

But there is hope. History has an ultimate trajectory, one that is guided by the hand of God. Heaven hears the cries of the oppressed; the heart of the kingdom is liberation.

Empires rise, but they also fall. In the end, power will be proved to be powerless against love, which is the only thing that lasts forever. If you tread all over other people for your own gain, you are setting yourself against the Rock of Ages.

Though it sometimes doesn't seem like it, we are moving forward. As the Reverend Martin Luther King Jr famously put it: 'The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice.'

*Father God,
Instil in me the hope that comes with the deep knowledge of you. Help me to better perceive your hand upon history – the deliverance that your Holy Spirit is constantly and forever working in the world. And give me the courage and the wisdom to play my part. Amen.*

'Woe to you who add house to house and join field to field till no space is left and you live alone in the land.' (Isaiah 5:8)

When we think about the climate chaos that our world seems to be under, our first thoughts should rightly be about the injustices to those who are least able to adapt. From those living on farms in Bangladesh at constant risk of catastrophic flooding; through to the communities in the Amazon impacted by an increasing number of droughts and fires.

But injustice goes beyond people, to the whole of creation. Through a focus on short-term gain as opposed to careful stewardship, we have transformed landscapes that used to be alive with insects and birds, wildflowers and trees, to places devoid of beauty and devoid of life.

As we have transformed the land, we have increased the likelihood of natural disasters, which affect people in poverty the most. As Isaiah points out, huge areas of land are becoming uninhabitable in our lifetimes through heat, famine, drought, flood, storms and fire – on an unprecedented scale.

*Lord,
as we consider the impact our actions are having on people and on the wider planet, may we collectively work to find creative local solutions that can inspire and bring hope and healing to our hurting world. Amen.*

Andy Lester

Andy is the Head of Conservation at A Rocha UK.



LENT
APPEAL

Tearfund has launched an appeal this Lent to help empower and enrich the lives of more people living in poverty. We need your help if we are to continue following Jesus where the need is greatest. If you feel led to give, or to find out more, please visit www.tearfund.ca/lentappeal

Photo: David Mutua/Tearfund

'Remember that you were slaves in Egypt and the Lord your God redeemed you. That is why I give you this command today.'
(Deuteronomy 15:15)

Throughout the Old Testament, God tells the people of Israel to remember that they were liberated from Egypt. He does this five times in the book of Deuteronomy, always in the context of giving them a new commandment.

Part of the point God is making here, I believe, is to remind his people that they were not just freed from something, they were freed for something. Indeed, from the very beginning, God told his people that they were to be a blessing to other nations (Genesis 12:2).

We are liberated in order to liberate; blessed in order to bless; restored in order to restore.

*God of salvation,
Thank you for rescuing us, for blessing us, for saving us.
Help us to use the freedom you have given us to light up the
lives of people in need. Amen.*

'And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.' (Micah 6:8)

*Come Holy Spirit,
Awaken me afresh to my family, my workplace,
my city and this broken world.*

[Take a moment.
Lament to God over issues that are breaking your heart]

*Come Holy Spirit,
Let me partner with you to bring about transformation where I am
now. Show me how you want to use the skills you have given me to
show others how much you love them.*

[Wait on God and listen to what he says.
Write down any words or pictures he has for you.]

*Come Holy Spirit,
Grant me boldness and courage to bring your holy light in the
darkest of places, let these acts of kindness I carry out point only to
you God, to your glory, and let them help the world to wake up and
embrace your extravagant love.*

Amen.

'And what does the Lord require of you?
To act justly and to love mercy and to walk
humbly with your God.'

MICAH 6:8



'The Lord will surely comfort Zion and will look with compassion on all her ruins; he will make her deserts like Eden, her wastelands like the garden of the Lord.' (Isaiah 51:3)

Make do and mend

Though our dreams lie in ruin around us,
and fear is the favoured trend,
though events continue to confound us
we will make do, and mend.

Though our hearts are weary and bruised,
and disappointment seems our only friend,
though justice is discarded and power abused
we will make do, and mend.

Because the Earth bears the wounds of greed –
the desire to acquire and build and spend,
because creation cries out in need
we will make do, and mend.

Even if our hopes are entombed by the night
we will stand firm until the end,
and even as we wait for the coming of the light
we will make do, and mend.

WEEK SIX:

LET THERE BE WORSHIP

Being alive to God's love

'The great yearning that sweeps eternity is a yearning to praise, a yearning to serve.'

– Abraham Joshua Heschel



'But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions – it is by grace you have been saved.'
(Ephesians 2:4-5)

I think we imagine that one of the hardest things for us to understand is that God was made man, or that God is three persons in one in the Trinity, but I don't think it's that. I think the hardest thing for us to believe is how much God loves us just as we are.

Paul seems to have had a deep insight into the love of God in Christ, and he writes about it all the time. Love that is poured out into our hearts by the Holy Spirit so that we know deep down that we are children of God. We know God is merciful because he loves us even when we're deep in sin and rebellion; he is rich in love and mercy and makes us come alive.

This is grace – love that reaches down to where we are to forgive us, pick us up, and restore us in the depths of our beings.

*Dearest Lord,
Thank you for your grace. Reveal to us today the tenderness and the depths of your mercy – the mercy that reaches down to me wherever I am, whatever I've done, and however I'm feeling. Amen.*

Lucy Peppiatt

Lucy is the Principal of Westminster Theological Centre and the author of 'Rediscovering Scripture's Vision for Women'.

'Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.' (James 1:27)

A Muslim once said to me, 'If everyone would stick to the Bible, we would live in a far better world.' His comments were telling. It's an example of how our society today is looking for authentic Christianity. People are looking for those who not only carry the name, but whose lives reflect the life of Jesus.

We need to remember that we've been called to speak the gospel, live the gospel and show the gospel. To be faithful in consistent service to the orphan, weak, poor and vulnerable. The gospel is holistic – and it's not about us. It's about Jesus, and doing exactly what he would do. And he came to serve.

The creator of the universe came to seek relationship with us. He wants to include us in his work. It humbles me to think that the God of the universe is willing to include me in his plans, and that I can serve him as I reach out to the marginalised in our society. Will you?

Father in heaven,

I pray that in you we would find a good shepherd that leads us to still waters. And that we would discover the God of relationship and intimacy: the one who loves us with an everlasting love regardless of our condition. Amen.

Rev Les Isaac, OBE

Les is the founder and CEO of Ascension Trust, and pioneered the Street Pastors movement.

'We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed.' (2 Corinthians 4:8-9)

Scripture tells us that our faith can move mountains. So what do we do when the mountains do not move? What do we do when the illness doesn't get healed? When the disaster is not averted? When people we've spent our lives praying for never find God?

The brokenness of life cannot be ignored. And God didn't ignore it; he became part of it. Jesus knew all about grief and pain: he was rejected by his home community, betrayed by one of his friends, and faced an unimaginably terrifying death. He prayed for God to take that suffering away from him.

Yet he also accepted it. He never deflected his pain onto other people or wallowed in victimhood. In the midst of his greatest pain, he reached out to the criminal being crucified next to him (Luke 23:40-43). How could he do this? Because he knew that after brokenness comes resurrection.

There will be mountains in our lives that do not move. But we can take heart from the fact that, one day, out of the pain, something brand new may come to life.

Dear God,

Give us the strength to deal with brokenness in a healthy way; give us the patience to hold fast while we wait for resurrection. Help us to not return the pain that we are dealt, but transform us into instruments of greater love. Amen.

'And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.'
(Philippians 4:7)

Violence and hate plague our planet, unsettling our souls. How can Christians be equipped for peacebuilding? I found vital answers in Paul's Philippian letter, when he deals with two symptoms of lacking peace: disunity (4:2) and anxiety (4:6).

Peace is sourced in God through prayer: 'in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.' (4:6, NRSV)

Peace of God surpasses comprehension: 'peace is better than all understanding.'

Peace of God shields heart and mind: 'the peace of God... will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.'

Peace is sustained by Jesus Christ: 'Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.' (John 14:27, ESV)

Father God,

Today may we find peace in our fellowship with you. May your outrageous peace keep our hearts and minds secure, and soak our relationships with fellow humans and the whole of creation. Amen.

Claudia Moreira

Claudia is Tearfund's Country Director for Brazil.



LENT
APPEAL

Tearfund has launched an appeal this Lent to help empower and enrich the lives of more people like Florence. We need your help if we are to continue following Jesus where the need is greatest. If you feel led to give, or to find out more, please visit www.tearfund.ca/lentappeal

Photo: David Mutua/Tearfund

'Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke?' (Isaiah 58:6)

Florence is a farmer who has been unable to farm. Her small plot of land in Zimbabwe is now a barren, sun-scorched place. 'The last time I went to till my land was in early 2018... all my crops died because of this drought,' Florence says.

We know that creation is groaning. We know that we haven't treated creation with the care that such a gift deserves. And it's people like Florence – people living in poverty – who are paying the price.

But together, we can help. Through local churches, Tearfund is running Bible-based courses that give practical tips on how to be more self-reliant. Florence was trained in how to extend her business into chicken farming, making her less dependent on crops.

Yet life is still fragile for Florence and countless others like her. They need the practical help and spiritual hope that the church can offer.

Lord Jesus,

***Thank you for your everlasting hope and your life-changing love.
Help us all to bring that hope and love to people in need. Amen.***

Earnest Maswera

Earnest is Tearfund's Country Director for Zimbabwe.

'Blessed is she who has believed that the Lord would fulfil his promises to her!' (Luke 1:45)

The following is the Magnificat – the song of worship that Mary sang after being told of God's plan for her. It can be found at the end of the first chapter of Luke's gospel. Read it now as a declaration of hope and worship upon your own life – whatever circumstances you find yourself in.

*My soul glorifies the Lord
and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour,
for he has been mindful
of the humble state of his servant.
From now on all generations will call me blessed,
for the Mighty One has done great things for me –
holy is his name.*

*His mercy extends to those who fear him,
from generation to generation.
He has performed mighty deeds with his arm;
he has scattered those who are proud in their inmost thoughts.
He has brought down rulers from their thrones
but has lifted up the humble.
He has filled the hungry with good things
but has sent the rich away empty.
He has helped his servant Israel,
remembering to be merciful
to Abraham and his descendants for ever,
just as he promised our ancestors.*

Amen.

'The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.' (John 1:5)

What hope do we have then?

Night will fall on you.
Of course it will.

You will find yourself one day
alone
wandering the desert of your failures.
You will stand by the deathbed of your dreams,
helpless and afraid.

What hope do we have then?

My friend, when the Spirit wrapped itself
in the Rabbi's flesh, it declared
that we are to have life in all its fullness.
Yet we have forgotten that death
is part of life, that existence grows
from decay.

We have forgotten that night
is simply an opportunity
to anticipate
another sunrise.

WEEK SEVEN:

LET THERE BE RESURRECTION

Being alive to hope

**'You can cut all the flowers but you cannot
keep spring from coming.' – Pablo Neruda**



'But those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.' (Isaiah 40:31)

I love this verse. It has been such an encouragement to me in challenging seasons of life. I love its imagery and the invitation to set our gaze back on God.

As we look around at our world right now, there is so much that can cause our hearts to be overwhelmed with sorrow. The word 'hope' in this verse is '*qavah*' in Hebrew. It means to expect and to eagerly long for. This waiting on the Lord isn't a passive waiting, it's active and full of faith that God can move.

There is a brilliant African proverb that says, 'It is not wise to accept the offer of a shirt from a naked man'. In other words, if something is so good, the person offering it to you should be using it too.

This verse is an invitation from a man who knew hardship and difficulty, but he also knew what it meant to run to and wait on the Lord. So no matter the situation, let's take this invitation to eagerly and expectantly look to him.

Father,

We come to you honestly with all that is difficult, broken and hard in the world around us. May it not drive us away from you but towards you. We look eagerly towards you to move, to heal our land and to restore. Amen.

Dr Lisa Adjei

Lisa is Project Manager of The Justice Conference UK.

If one of you says to them, 'Go in peace; keep warm and well fed,' but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it? In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.' (James 2:16-17)

For many years, the tech giant Google had the phrase 'Don't be evil' as their corporate motto. At first, this seems an honourable enough aim. However, it doesn't stand up to any greater scrutiny.

It isn't enough to not be evil. It isn't enough to not do any harm. We must actively, purposefully, deliberately seek to do good.

There is a Jewish concept – *tikkun olam* – that means literally 'the repair of the world'. It has come to embody a life that is lived in pursuit of justice and compassion; one that is defined by acts of kindness, great and small.

A faith that ignores the current needs of the world is meaningless. If the church does not take deliberate action for the healing of the world, it is nothing but a clanging symbol – just noise. We all need to live with *tikkun olam* in our hearts.

God of repair,

Fill us with love – the love that leads to compassion. Fill us with faith – the faith that leads to action. And fill us with hope – the hope that leads to a better world for all. Amen.

'Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.' (Lamentations 3:22-23)

I often get asked how I keep doing what I'm doing in the face of the stories I hear of women being abused by their husbands and partners. What I hear is horrific, sometimes barbaric, always diminishing the survivors of abuse.

With each story of abuse, however, there is a counter-story of hope and love. This comes in the form of Christians reaching out to provide unconditional support, to walk alongside the survivor to bring healing, justice and hope for the future.

Personally, this is about discipleship and obedience to God's calling. When I co-founded Restored in 2010, I had lamented to God about the situation, and I heard God challenge me to step up and out of my comfort zone to do something.

In the darkness, it is us that brings the light, love and hope, but only if we are prepared to step out of our comfort zones and follow God's will for us.

*Dear Lord Jesus,
When the darkness closes in, may I see your light of love shining through and showing the way forward. Grant me the courage to bring your light and love to those in need. Amen.*

Mandy Marshall

Mandy is the Co-Director at Restored, an international Christian alliance that aims to transform relationships and end violence against women.

'Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.' (Galatians 6:9)

I remember visiting a forest as part of my ecology course at university, some 20 years ago. I knew then I wanted to be part of the movements working tirelessly to ensure that this beauty did not disappear.

Many times, in this journey, it seems that more has been lost than preserved. It is easy to grow 'weary' when it appears as if you are alone in the battle. When those that you think should be at the forefront of this fight seem not to care... close relatives, friends, or even the church.

We should be strengthened in the knowledge that we serve a God who is a 'farmer' and always true to his word. The good that we are sowing will indeed reap a good harvest in his time. Thus, we should never give up, even when we are the only ones in our neighbourhood taking initiatives to replant trees, recycle and live sustainably.

Dear Lord,

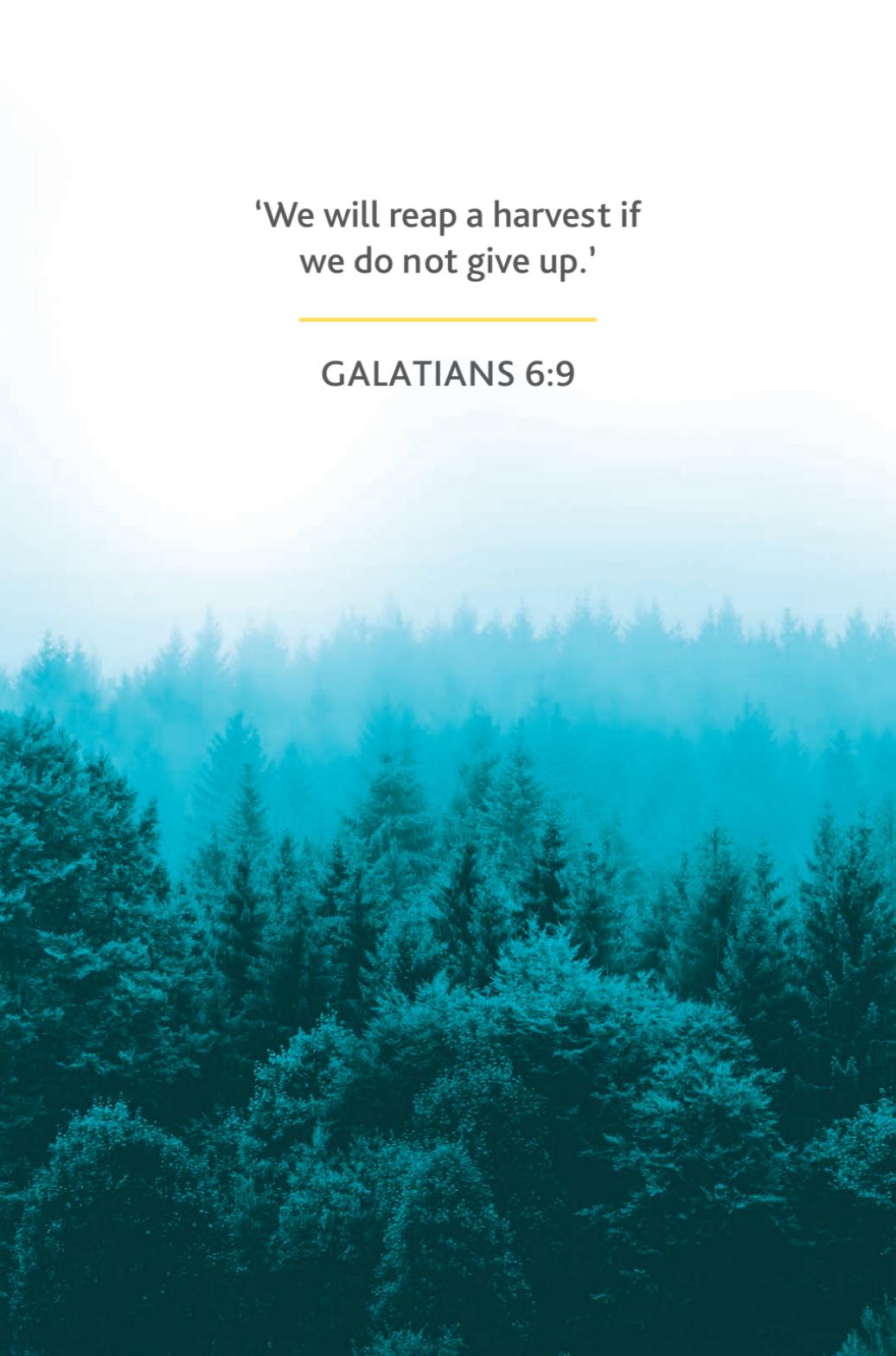
We pray that you will give us supernatural strength to continue to do good and care for your creation and one another. We also thank you for the harvest that will come from this work... in our time and in that of the generations to come. Amen.

Dr Tiwonge Gawa

Tiwonge is an activist and a lecturer in Ecology at the Malawi University of Science and Technology.

'We will reap a harvest if
we do not give up.'

GALATIANS 6:9



'It was now about noon, and darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon, for the sun stopped shining.' (Luke 23:44-45)

I remember very clearly the first time the gospel truly 'clicked' for me.

It was during a talk someone gave at a youth group when I was a teenager. They stood at the front and lit a candle. 'Doesn't seem especially bright, does it?' they asked.

Then they turned the lights out. Suddenly it seemed as though the candle was the only thing that existed. The whole room seemed drawn to the dancing flame as it threw stains of light against the void.

Without darkness, it can be difficult to understand the true eloquence of light.

Unless we step away from our comfort; unless our hearts are torn; unless a body is broken and the sky turns black... we cannot become the light that the world needs.

Dear God,

Help me to see darkness not as something to be feared, but as an opportunity to better understand the light. Help me to take my own light into places of darkness. Amen.

'It was now about noon, and
darkness came over the whole land
until three in the afternoon, for the
sun stopped shining.'

LUKE 23:44-45



'Yes, my soul, find rest in God; my hope comes from him. Truly he is my rock and my salvation; he is my fortress, I shall not be shaken.' (Psalm 62:5-6)

At Tearfund, we strive to be an organization that is fuelled by hope. Not a hope of wishful thinking or false optimism, but one that is grounded in the certainty of God's goodness.

Yet sometimes hope is elusive in the midst of a world where 82 million people like you and me across the global south have been displaced from their homes as refugees. Why them, and not me? Or when I think of the future for my grandchildren looking at the impacts of climate change on them – what does the future hold?

But I choose to put my faith and hope in the FACT that God is our refuge, he is my mighty rock, he is my fortress. And then we act. So what does the Psalmist call us out to do? People pour out your hearts to Him, for He is our refuge.

With every blessing,

Wayne Johnson

*Executive Director & CEO Tearfund Canada, husband,
father and grandfather.*

DAY 47

OPEN YOUR ARMS

Sunday 12 April

'The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.' (John 10:10)

How to be more alive

First, open your arms to your own humanity; give the gorgeous mess of your entirety a warm welcome, remembering that all of you is loved, free from limit or condition.

Second, drop your heart into a pool of wonder – that sacred, healing water found among the stillness, found wherever there are trees or birds or streams or hills or the opulence of an unfiltered sky.

Do not let the screens hem you in; seek instead the heaven-wrought, the spirit-woven – all that brightly sings of the Abundance.

Third, let your love travel beyond all bounds, let the curtains tear before it so that nothing is left unadored – including your brokenness and the failings of the world. Every soul walks with a limp, and not one is unworthy of compassion's embrace.

And finally, remember. Remember your divine heritage. Remember the holy sacrament poured out for you in the form of a gentle man's blood. Remember that the cold shackles of death could not hold him, could not stop him from coming back for you.

Gideon Heugh

TEARFUND SUNDAY 2020

September 2020 - June 2021

**WE WON'T
STOP UNTIL
POVERTY
STOPS.**

Tearfund Sunday is an opportunity to connect your congregation directly to the incredible work God is doing in the poorest places on Earth through His local church.

With scriptural teaching and inspiring stories, members will learn about

how God is building His Kingdom on Earth and be challenged with practical actions to join Him.

Conducted either by a certified Tearfund speaker – or on your own – each package contains everything you need to host a complete Sunday morning that members will not soon forget.

THIS YEAR'S THEME

Motivated by the relentless love of Jesus, we believe in the restoration of broken relationships, helping individuals and communities to unlock their God-given potential.

Together, we can all make a difference, we all have a part to play; and we are closer than ever to ending extreme poverty.

**WE WON'T STOP
UNTIL POVERTY STOPS.**



EVERY PACKAGE INCLUDES:

- A full set of sermon notes based on biblical text
- Engaging stories in written and video format
- A PowerPoint Presentation with powerful images
- Congregational Handouts
- Posters to promote the event
- And more

REGISTER TODAY!

Dates for speaker engagements book early and will run out soon.

To register:

Call: 1-800-567-8190 (toll-free), or

Visit: www.tearfund.ca/wewontstop-resgister



Tearfund mobilizes God's church in the very poorest places to unlock people's God-given potential and create flourishing and resilient communities.

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