

LIFEWORDS

Lifewords Prayer, February 2018

The angel of the Lord came back a second time and touched Elijah and said, 'Get up and eat, for the journey is too much for you.' So he got up and ate and drank. Strengthened by that food, he travelled for forty days and forty nights until he reached Horeb, the mountain of God.

1 Kings 19:7-8

The Bible is full of wilderness stories. Hagar goes out to the wilderness with her son, believing she would die there. The Israelites are liberated from Egypt ... to the desert. The prophets call out from the stony emptiness of the wilderness, raising a voice of hope and expectation. John the Baptist gathers people at the edge of the Judean desert, preaching a message of repentance. And of course, Jesus spends forty days in that same desert, preparing for his public ministry.

The wilderness serves as a motif throughout the Bible story. It is not just a physical place – but a chapter of life, a space that we are called or compelled to occupy. Through circumstance, through adversity, and sometimes through choice. The wilderness is a place of emptiness, even desolation. For Jesus it is a place both of testing, but also of clarity. The story of Elijah adds one more note to the wilderness experience. For those of us who are tired, for those of us who are broken, for those of us who are weary of the struggle – Elijah's desert experience brings something unexpected: rest and sustenance. The silence and emptiness of the desert is transformed into spaciousness in which to recover.

The season of Lent (which begins this month), and the discipline of fasting offer us a wilderness moment for our lives. Here is an invitation to us to enter the wide-open space of the desert. To remove something of the comforts we rely on, to embrace difficulty, to dial down the distractions that keep us ever-moving. Or like Elijah, simply to rest, remembering that we are human.

Welcome to the February edition of Lifewords Prayer. This month we're exploring different ways to engage new generations with the Bible, looking ahead to sharing God's story at Easter, recognising the work achieved with our international partnerships, and hearing about some of the ways life words are impacting lives around the world.

4–10 February

Experiments in Evangelism

Lifeworlds exists because the Bible is for everyone – and we want people everywhere to experience it as good news for their lives and for the world. The latest issue of *Interact* magazine talks about a few of the projects we're working on to share the gospel in new and creative ways.

- Lifeworlds Indonesia's partner, Pelita Dunia Seminary, welcomed 50 new students in September. It was an opportunity for Lifeworlds to extend its out-of-the-classroom training for evangelism, where students practice sharing good news in public spaces such as shopping centres and bus stations. "Everyone has a different experience," said Lifeworlds Indonesia Director, Gunar Sahari. "Some of them feel afraid at the beginning, but they encourage each other to share the gospel." Praise God for these students and for their growing confidence in sharing God's love.
- Last summer thousands of young people gathered at Soul Survivor and Elim Limitless Bible festivals in Stafford, Peterborough, Malvern and Kinross. Lifeworlds partnered with Youthscape and gave each young person who made a first-time faith commitment a new, innovative card game – *Shuffle* – designed to help them take their first steps into Christian life through Bible verses, prayer actions and practices. Give thanks for almost 2,000 young people becoming Christians and pray that the *Shuffle* cards help them understand what being a Christian means for their daily lives.
- We've been working with Labyrinth, a project that explores cities and their stories through 'City Hacks' (which are turned into walking tours). We've partnered with them for Mark's Gospel-themed hacks in Melbourne, London, and Washington DC. It's a niche but fascinating way to use the Bible in public space, and to invite people to consider questions of power, politics, and the mission of Jesus. Please pray that participants would be inspired by the Gospel stories, and challenged to deepen their experience of who Jesus is.

To read more about these projects, please visit www.lifeworlds.global/blog

11–17 February

God's Word at Easter

2017 was a record-breaking Christmas! We provided – and you shared – more than 152,000 copies of OUTSIDE/IN and other Christmas booklets. As we get ready for Easter, here are stories of how some are taking the opportunity to share life words again.

- After ordering several packs of our Christmas resources, Alastair from Bournemouth has decided to use the Easter season as another opportunity to reach people. "The Christmas booklets went down so well in our church and local community," said Alastair, "so we were excited to see what we might be able to get for Easter. *One Friday* and *Witness* perfectly capture the inclusivity of Jesus' message in the world. We're grateful to Lifeworlds for the enthusiasm and willingness in making so many booklets freely available." Give thanks for Alastair's church and others like it who are using Bible booklets in their Easter services and outreach events.
- Maurice from Scotland first made a commitment to Jesus in prison six years ago. Since his release last year he has joined a Bible study group run by Bethany Christian Trust and Glasgow City Mission designed for ex-offenders, addicts and

men experiencing homelessness. "I'm ordering copies of *Witness: Easter Voices* to share with my fellow members," said Maurice. As these men receive their copy of *Witness: Easter Voices* please pray that they will engage with the liberating power of Jesus' death and resurrection for themselves.

- Lincoln Road Chapel in London has downloaded the eight-part short film series, *Easter Journey*. They plan to play the films at their mothers and toddlers group Easter sessions. "Your animations are very attractively produced and will be really helpful in our meetings," says group assistant, Debbie. "They're also really accessible where language can sometimes be a barrier for some of our mums. It's something that is short enough to keep the children's attention too." Give thanks for creative ideas like this that can appeal to people everywhere.

To order your free Easter resources and download the short animations, please visit www.lifewords.global/easter.

18–24 February

Partnering together

We work with all kinds of partners to share life words, and to make sure that ways in to the Bible are available for everyone, free of charge. Give thanks for this invaluable support from on-the-ground organisations and funders whose partnership makes so much ministry possible.

- Viva Network Zimbabwe is a network of Christian organisations and churches who work to help children in Zimbabwe live in safe, loving homes and communities. Lifewords Kenya has partnered with Viva for two training workshops to date – together they are using Pavement Project to bring healing and restoration to children-at-risk. "Working with Viva means we're able to reach so many children who desperately need to experience how valuable they are to God." says Lifewords Kenya Programme Director, Clara Ngobolia. "Pavement Project is a gift to these organisations and churches as it gives them such an effective tool for children who have suffered abuse, trauma, and neglect. And they are a gift to us! They are the hearts and hands – the way that children will come to know Jesus' love for them." Praise God for this partnership, and pray that children's lives will be transformed because of it.
- Last year, NINE BEATS was launched – a project sponsored by Lifewords – bringing together a Collective of artists, musicians, thinkers and activists, all on the trail of the beatitudes. NINE BEATS uses creative arts and events to explore these provocative sayings of Jesus, and his invitation to walk the way of trust, lament, humility, justice, compassion, peace-making, suffering, and radical love. Launching a brand new initiative like this takes lots of planning, development, creativity – and funding! Give thanks for those Trusts and individuals who have donated generously, and help projects like NINE BEATS to provide fresh ways in to the Bible for new generations.
- In September we shared news about Christian Medical College (CMC) in Vellore, India who asked for 25,000 copies of *Why Me?* in Bengali to share with their hospital patients in need of life words. We asked you to pray that we would receive the funding and resources needed for print production costs. Thank you for your prayers and support, and to all those who donated. Lifewords can now provide CMC with 25,000 booklets to share hope and assurance with their patients in the midst of pain and distress. Amazing! Please pray for the doctors at CMC as they use

Why Me? to begin faith conversations. Pray too for patients that they will experience emotional and spiritual rest in difficult situations.

To get further involved with our work and make more opportunities like this possible, please visit www.lifewords.global/give.

25 February – 3 March

Prayer, hope and strength

Life words change lives. Thank you to those of you who've been in touch to share your experiences of good news at work.

- During a period of sickness, 72-year-old Richard from Yorkshire attended his church fellowship group where he picked up a copy of *Daily Strength*. "I've been a Christian for 20 years but as I read this booklet it was the first time I had really understood what 'out of the darkness was God's light' actually meant," said Richard. "*Daily Strength* took me from hopelessness into unimaginable hope. Thank you immensely for putting out the Word of God in a readable form. It's spirit and life; it's eternal and authority. You've inspired me to find ways of getting out there and spreading God's Word, truth and life, because I now see what really matters in life."
- Part-time prison Chaplain Liberté Harries often orders Lifewords resources for the men at HMP Pentonville's segregation unit. "I cannot explain to you how important your booklets are," says Liberté. "The segregation unit is where the men who have been especially difficult go. I had a prisoner only this morning ask for *Little Book of Chaos*, which is so apt. So many lives are lived at such a chaotic level and these resources help them cope." Please pray for all our partners in the gospel like Liberté and many others who are committed to helping people experience the person and story of Jesus in the situation they're in.
- Iara Peixôto regularly witnesses to children, young people and workers in Spain. Just before Christmas he met a woman who was experiencing difficulties getting to sleep. "She complained about feeling an evil presence around her," says Iara. "When I visited her she mentioned that the only thing that would help her feel calm was *The Way to Life* – a Lifewords booklet she had received from a woman at a bus stop. I used the Bible booklet to pray with her and today she says she feels at peace and is no longer tormented." Give thanks for God's healing at work through the Bible and through prayer. Pray too for translation teams, making the Bible accessible in many languages and countries around the world.

You can view our range of English resources and global language booklets online at www.lifewords.global/shop.

Thank you for praying with us! Your partnership in prayer is vital to all that we do as we share the Bible's life words around the world. You can make a donation to our work online at www.lifewords.global, by post or by calling 020 7730 2155.