

LIFEWORDS

Lifewords Prayer, April 2018

*"The women hurried away from the tomb,
afraid yet filled with joy, and ran to tell his disciples.
Suddenly Jesus met them. "Greetings," he said.
They came to him, clasped his feet and worshipped him.
Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid.
Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me."
Matthew 28:8-10, NIV*

From Genesis right through to Revelation, we encounter God telling us to "fear not". But fear is real. It's a natural emotion we experience in times of uncertainty and despair.

Imagine how Jesus' mother, disciples, friends and followers might have felt while witnessing his final moments on the Cross. Crushed? Lonely? Scared? They have seen their son, friend and teacher reject old laws, protest against injustice and inequality, teach true compassion and live a compelling life of truth and love. He had healed the broken, protected the innocent, forgiven the judged, restored humanity and reintegrated the overlooked into the community. He has radically spun society on its head. And now he is dead.

So, on the third day when Mary Magdalene and the women find Jesus' tomb empty, it's no wonder they feel anxious and unnerved, unsure of what is happening.

But these women remind us what to do in the face of fear — they fall at Jesus' feet and worship him. These women are afraid, but they also respond to Jesus with joy, and hope that dares to trust beyond belief.

The Easter narrative is full of ups and downs, light and dark, hope and despair. Yet the end of the story is emphatic — here is hope and joy, and here is Jesus telling his friends and followers to not be afraid. In a world still full of turmoil, we are called to be people of deep and profound hope. "Do not abandon yourselves to despair" said John Paul II, "we are an Easter people and hallelujah is our song."

Welcome to the April edition of Lifewords Prayer. This month we celebrate Easter, share some exciting news about Life Changing Words, hear from a Choose Life student, and update you on *Day by Day*.

1–7 April

Investigate Easter

Last month primary schools' development worker, Alison, held a series of themed Easter events called Investigate Easter, for 7–11 year olds. Visiting a total of 800 pupils across seven schools in Staffordshire, Alison shared 500 copies of Lifewords resource *Witness: Easter Voices*.

- The Investigate Easter project had detective-themed events and problem-solving activities, including coded tasks, spies and crime scenes. The students were given clues and evidence based on various scenes from the Easter story, which they had to investigate and evaluate before presenting their case. Give thanks for Alison and her team, and others like them, who work with children and young people, using creative ways to engage them with the Bible.
- “We encourage the children to explore their own thoughts as well as the opinions of their classmates,” says Alison, “so *Witness: Easter Voices* fitted in perfectly. It’s great being able to offer a resource that considers and presents multiple perspectives in a story.” Please pray that each student who took a copy of *Witness: Easter Voices*, might feel encouraged to read the resource, ask questions and continue discovering a life and relationship with Jesus.
- Alison is a member of Youth Net – a UK charity that networks, resources and inspires local schools and churches. They work to help young people reach their full potential and impact their generation by offering spiritual, emotional, educational and social support. Give thanks for youth workers who are investing in young people. Please pray for them as they undertake this important and often challenging work.

Do you have an Easter story you’d like to share with us? Please send an email to uk@lifewords.global or phone us on 020 7730 2155.

8–14 April

Life words in your pocket

More than three billion people worldwide now have access to the internet. For almost 15 years Lifewords has been resourcing communities with Life Changing Words (LCWords) — a free email service and mobile app that sends daily Bible verses straight to users' devices, in 12 different global languages.

- LCWords already has tens of thousands of global users, and last year almost 27,000 verses were shared by email, social media, or text message to a friend. Give thanks for the ways in which mobile devices are being used as pastoral and evangelistic tools, especially in times where people may not have a physical Bible resource to hand.

- We would now like to further develop LCWords and update its digital content. This includes uploading digital versions of our Bible resources to the app, allowing users to read them online and share them with friends and family. As well as reading and passing on daily verses, we want people to be able to share a message of depth and value, tailored to people's needs – communicated through both text and image. Please pray that this new content will bring good news to many.
- At the same time, we plan to re-design some of our core range of literature to ensure the booklets stay fresh, relevant and up-to-date. We hope to be able to commit in the region of £50,000 to this work in 2018 – on top of our regular budget for distributing Bible resources around the world free of charge. Give thanks for those who are able to support Lifewords' work through prayer and gifts. Please pray that we are able to meet our target and can equip more people with life words for themselves and their community.

If you are able to help put life words in people's pockets, and would like to support this project please visit www.lifewords.global/lcwords.

15–21 April

Choose Life: four years on

In 2014 Lifewords Kenya met Nancy – a high school student at Nyumbani children's home. During her time at school she attended Choose Life evening classes taught by Lifewords volunteer Jane Wamaitha. Here is Nancy's story:

- With 1.6 million people living with HIV, Kenya is one of the most HIV-affected countries in the world. Even though awareness is high, many fear the stigma and discrimination the condition still carries so decide not to seek support. This was the case for Nancy. Although Nyumbani Children's Home specialises in providing care to HIV-positive children, Nancy chose not to disclose to friends or at school that she was taking regular medication, and eventually stopped taking it as prescribed. Please pray for children and adults worldwide like Nancy, who might be living with HIV in silence.
- Choose Life is an interactive classroom programme designed to help young people develop decision-making skills and values for life, based on the Bible's wisdom. "After the first few sessions Nancy told me she had made the choice to start taking the HIV medication again," says Jane. "From then her health improved, she was able to focus in class, and graduate from high school." Praise God for the impact of Choose Life in building character and empowering young people with the ability to make the best choices for their lives and their community.
- Nancy has since gone on to take courses in photography, videography, and music production. "She is chasing her dreams and achieving so much," says Jane. "Now when I speak to her, she's able to talk about her life issues without the pain and bitterness. Nancy always talks about Choose Life to those she meets and says it has helped her face any dilemma she's going through." Give thanks for the Bible's life words that are transforming the hearts and minds of young people through Choose Life.

To support Choose Life and help make more stories of transformation like this possible, please visit www.lifewords.global/give.

22–28 April Day by Day

We're pleased that Lifeworlds' resource *Day by Day* is now back in stock! With daily bite-sized portions of Scripture and prayer, *Day by Day* takes verses that encourage us in our lives and show us God's truth and guidance. Many of you got in touch too with your feedback on the resource, and we have taken this on board in the new edition – thank you! With a larger and bolder font, we hope *Day by Day* is now even more accessible.

- “I’ve supported Lifeworlds for 40 years and I can’t express how powerful *Day by Day* has been,” says Beryl from Sunderland. “It’s a great way to introduce young people and older groups to God, and I use it for myself too.” Give thanks for Beryl and others like her who are committed to helping others experience the Bible as good news in their lives.
- “The resource is simply wonderful,” says John from Buckinghamshire. “I’m a retired pastor, but I still have a large network of churches that I’m in touch with. *Day by Day* is an all-time favourite for so many of us and having daily messages can positively transform the shape of your day.” Praise God for the impact the Bible can have in our work, family life, relationships and community. Pray that more and more of us would be hungry for God’s Word to help us in our everyday lives.
- “Praise God! This is what I’ve prayed for,” says Lexie from Shrewsbury. “Lifeworlds has always produced great Bible literature and the quality gets better and better. Thank you for always listening and acting so quickly. My husband and I will continue to support your work.” Give thanks for over 130 years of Lifeworlds’ ministry, and for the many decades of support through prayer and giving that has enabled us to reach so many with good news.

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.lifeworlds.global, by post, or by calling 020 7730 2155.