

Day 1—Germany

By Judi Hodges

Read: I Corinthians 12 • Luke 10:30-37

Imagine the story of the Good Samaritan without the innkeeper. How would this change the story?

As a church planting worker in the former East part of Berlin, I found myself overwhelmed with the number of people I felt God had given me to care for and to nurture. My schedule was packed, and there were always more people who needed to hear the Word about God's love. As I was reading this familiar story, I realized I felt like the Good Samaritan with a donkey full of wounded people, more all around me, and no inn in sight! I recognized the treasure we have in the church as the body of Christ. Working without a church behind me, I was like the Good Samaritan without an inn. The church at home had always been there to receive the people that I had encountered. There were different ministries and individuals to help to nurture, shelter and/or nurse wounded and needy persons back to health in the environment of God's love and teaching. God in His wisdom recognizes our limitations as finite persons. We are born with talents, learn skills, and with the coming of the Holy Spirit in our lives, He gives us spiritual gifts. No one gets all the gifts, has every skill or talent, nor all the same role, but together we are complete.

When you feel like an unimportant part of the body, ask God to show you the talents, skills and gifts He has given you. Ask Him to show you where you are to get involved in the story of bringing the lost into the shelter of His body, healing them, strengthening them and restoring them to go out into the world as living Gospels.

Prayer Focus

For the German People: For those needing shelter; for a congregation that is loving, receiving, nurturing, teaching, sheltering and worshiping; for strength to overcome discouragement; for a godly outlet for our spiritual gifts; for loving hearts to respond to His call; for a joyful heart in serving; to be filled with a spirit of working together to form the body of Christ; for those struggling against persecution, extreme poverty and high unemployment; for rebirth of life following years of oppression; for the boys and girls in the Royal Rangers group; for the youth that play basketball weekly; that the families of the youth and children ministered to by Team Berlin would receive the Gospel message.

Prayers for Judi: For the strength to handle the magnitude of the opportunities presented to her; for spiritual growth; that she would not grow weary in her call; for good health and physical vitality; for financial support to meet all of her needs; for the safety and reassurance of her family back home.

Small Group Discussion Questions

1. How do you see the role of the church as that of an innkeeper?
2. What do you do when you are feeling overwhelmed by the task presented to you?
3. How do you see your role in fulfilling the ministries of the church?

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Isaiah 26:3 and 4
Isaiah 43:1-7
Romans 1:16 and 17
II Timothy 1:12b

SUGGESTED PSALMS, HYMNS & SPIRITUAL SONGS

Trinity Hymnal:

#504 *I am Trusting Thee, Lord Jesus*
#705 *I Know Whom I Have Believed*
#468 *My Faith Has Found a Resting Place.*

Bible Songs:

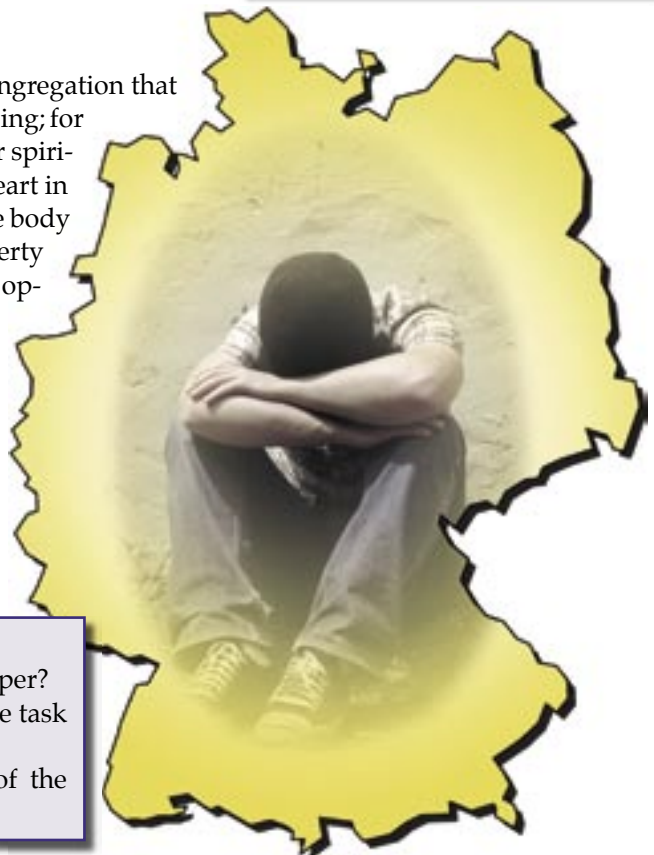
#7 *On the Good and Faithful*
#202 *Sing a New Song to Jehovah*
#268 *They in the Lord that Fully Trust.*

The Hymnbook:

#292 *I'm Not Ashamed to Own My Lord*
#369 *How Firm a Foundation*
#420 *Peace, Perfect Peace.*

Contemporary:

The Servant Song by Richard Gillard
He is Our Peace by Kandela Groves



Day 2—Russia

By Debbie Schwencer

Read: Isaiah 1:18

In Russia, spring begins on March 1, not on March 22 as it does in the U.S. With the “warmer” weather (32 to 36 degrees F) comes a little melting of the huge piles of snow that have accumulated all winter. A walk near any metro station or bus stop in Moscow gives us the most disgusting illustration we ever see of the need that was met so perfectly in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

For the melting of the surface snow that is so blindingly white and pristine just a week or two ago now reveals the most incredible collection of *filth*—automotive pollution, beer bottles, cigarette packaging, chip bags, orange peels, articles of clothing, gum wrappers, dog waste, old tires, gazillions of cigarette butts, and often, thoroughly frozen human bodies.

This has to be what God would see of our lives without the Pristine Covering offered for our sins. What a comfort to know that even the fires of hell cannot melt away that covering to reveal the filth underneath. Words cannot express our gratitude for that incomprehensible gift. Have you thanked Him for it today?

Prayer Focus

For the Russian People: That they would truly see that the Great Commission begins in their neighborhoods; for the work being done with the Russian children and youth; for those who must overcome years of influence of communism, materialism, and atheism; that Russian Christians would reach out to unbelieving friends and family members; for knowledge that God is working in places and circumstances where humans fear to tread; that God can and will use the most meager resources for His glory; for the lost to know the sheltering love of our Lord and Savior; for those who commute for work and school; for the homeless, motherless and fatherless; for the abused and broken ; for those who lack hope; for those held hostage by alcohol and drug abuse, and their families; that the filth in our lives will be revealed and overcome; for acceptance of our responsibility to care for the earth and all that is in it; for those in the darkness to come into the light; for gratitude for what the Lord has done for us.

For the Schwencer Family: A productive time at home ; for continued learning of the language and culture, and that God would use both to provide outreach opportunities for them; that they would continue to offer the Russian people encouragement.

Small Group Discussion Questions

1. How many times do you think you sin in a day?
2. Would you go to the grocery store in a sweat suit with no make up? Why or why not?
3. New life in Christ has been compared to the coming of the spring season. How is this so?

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Deuteronomy 24:5
Psalm 103
Luke 11:27-28
Matthew 7:7-12

SUGGESTED PSALMS, HYMNS & SPIRITUAL SONGS

Trinity Hymnal:

- #550 *O Thou Who Hear'st When Sinners Cry*
- #486 *God Be Merciful to Me*
- #576 *Awake, My Soul, Stretch Every Nerve*

Bible Songs

- # 64–#68 *How Blest the Man Whose Trespass*
- #109 *O Mighty Man, Why Boast in Sin?*
- #185 *Lord, Thou Hast Been Our Dwelling Place*

The Hymnbook

- #273 *Depth of Mercy! Can There Be*
- #236 *Spirit of God, Descend Upon My Heart*
- #319 *O, For a Closer Walk With God*

Contemporary

- Create in Me a Clean Heart* by Brown Bannister
- He Is Faithful* by Walt Harrah
- Wellspring* by Nancy Lowry



Day 3—Mexico

By Shelia Osborne

Read: Ephesians 5:22, Ephesians 5:33, Ephesians 5:31

Desperate Wives? When you count your blessings, are you thankful you don't have to live with your in-laws? We tend to take for granted that we have our own home to live in with our family. Consider one of the young couples in our discipleship class. They have twin girls, age 5, and a 2-year-old son. They live with the husband's parents, as does his grandmother, and his older unmarried sister. Each "family unit" has their own bedroom, but they all share one bathroom, the kitchen, and living room. That's nine people living in one house. This is very common here in Mexico. Part of the reason is economics, but another factor is what is happening with this couple. The husband's mother does not want them to move out. He is the youngest in the family, and she is very protective of him.



The mother-son relationship among Mexicans (and all Latin Americans) is very strong. This is a traditional teaching of the Catholic churches in Mexico about the relationship to the Virgin Mary, the mother of Jesus. For all Christians, the bond between a mother and her son is evident. Many times it is the mothers who control the families (and churches, regrettably). The sons are often times torn between their allegiances to their mothers vs. their wives. In the case of our friends, the wife would very much like for them to have their own home, and they could afford it, but the husband is reluctant to go against his mother's wishes. During our discipleship time, she has requested prayer for a home, and has shared a little with me privately. But he avoids talking about it, so she just tries to make the best of it.

Do you think you could be as patient and submissive as she is? I know for me it would be very hard long-term! In the past, we have been in the situation where it was necessary to live with relatives. It was challenging, but we managed because we knew it was temporary. What if it was for six years, like our friends? Talk about a 'Desperate Wife!' So, the next time you become frustrated with your in-laws or other relatives, or your life in general, think about our friends here. Be thankful for your own private home, your own bedroom, probably your own bathroom, your own kitchen, your "great room," your two cars, your washing machine and dryer, your central air and heat, your good drinking water from the faucets, all of the things that we take for granted!

Prayer Focus

For the Mexican people: Married couples, young and old, and their families; those with unbelieving spouses; for families to see the need to nurture their faith; for the elderly; for single persons; for our extended families; for those who live far from their families; that we would learn to be more submissive to Christ; that we would be submissive to those in authority over us; that godly wisdom be given to those in superior positions to us; for godly elders and leaders in the church; for God's abundant provision for our daily lives; for those struggling with extreme poverty and high unemployment; that kidnappings would cease; for upcoming mission trips to Mexico; for all the missionaries on the Mexican team; for the ARP churches and seminary in Mexico.

Small Group Discussion Questions

1. After leaving your childhood home, what was your first home like? What opportunities did you have to "love thy neighbor"?
2. What are some of the blessings and challenges of living "too close to" or "too far away" from your family?
3. Frequently today, being submissive is considered "out of style." How is this a conflict for a Christian?

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Deuteronomy 24:5
Psalm 103
Luke 11:27-28
Matthew 7:7-12

SUGGESTED PSALMS, HYMNS & SPIRITUAL SONGS

Trinity Hymnal:

#6 O Come My Soul, Bless Thou the Lord
#76, #77 Praise, My Soul, the King of Heaven
#78 O Bless the Lord, My Soul

Bible Songs

#217 O My Soul, Bless Thou Jehovah
#242 I Love the Lord, for He Did Hear
#305 Hallelujah! Praise Jehovah

The Hymnbook

#454 O Love Divine and Golden
#248 Book of Books, Our People's Strength
#455 O Happy Home, Where Thou Art Loved

Contemporary

His Banner Over Me is Love (traditional
—composer unknown)
The Reconciliation Song by Morris Chapman, Buddy Owens and Claire Cloninger
Make Your Presence Known by John Barbour

Day 4—Wales

By Dottie Bigham

Read: Romans 3:21-22

In the UK, a new resident from a non-European Union country is allowed to drive for one year with his country's driver's license. By the end of a year the driver must have obtained a UK driving license. When I realized a provisional license was needed before I could begin the testing process and that my passport was needed to request it, I was completing the application for my visa renewal—which, of course, required my passport. When I received the renewed visa, the time was too close to my trip to the States to part with my passport again. I made several calls and sent a written request to the DVLA office, hoping that someone would offer me a solution. While I was hoping for grace, I found them to be very careful about sticking to the letter of the law. When I returned from the States, the possible penalty should something happen while I was driving caused me to leave my car parked.

God demands perfect obedience to His Law. The consequence of disobedience is death, yet by His grace He has paid the penalty for our sin through the death and resurrection of His Son, our Savior, Jesus Christ. "[God] did it to demonstrate his justice at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus" (Romans 3:26).

The DVLA office justly followed the law regarding my UK driving license. Thanks be to God for His just provision of Jesus Christ on my behalf.

Prayer Focus

For the people of Wales: That their children would hunger and thirst for Christ having met Him through the summer teams; for Christian teens to be motivated and equipped to reach out to their peers with the Gospel of Jesus Christ; for such an outreach to impact the high suicide rate; for the struggling evangelical congregations throughout the Valley of South Wales; for the Wales team to offer encouragement to the pastors, as well as help with leadership and teacher training; for the struggling evangelical churches scattered throughout the Valley of South Wales. Pray for the Wales Team as we seek to come alongside these churches to encourage pastors and to help with leadership and teacher training; for the Gordon College and Erskine College mission team members that were in Wales the summer of 2005 to fulfill their commitment to maintain correspondence with Welsh students via letters and e-mail, offering encouragement and love; for God's work in their lives as a result of their experiences in Wales, and possibly a call into full-time ministry; for the participants in various short-term mission experiences (one-week and three months).

For Dottie: Pray for the small group ministry; for opportunities to work with local youth group leaders; for contacts to be made in the coffee shop ministry in Pontypridd.

Small Group Discussion Questions

1. In your life, when and how did you experience the grace of God by accepting Jesus as your Savior?
2. What experiences can you share where only by the grace of God you persevered?
3. What do you see is the difference between grace and law? How do they function separately and together?

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Psalm 89:14-16
Ephesians 2:8,9
II Corinthians 12:9
Romans 3:23,24
II Peter 3:18

SUGGESTED PSALMS, HYMNS & SPIRITUAL SONGS

Trinity Hymnal:

#99 *My Song Forever Shall Record*
#456 *By Grace I'm Saved*
#524 *Thy Works, Not Mine O Christ*

Bible Songs:

#182 *My Song Shall Evermore Record*
#140 *In Full Assurance of Thy Grace* (also #141–#144)
#122 *My Soul With Expectation*

The Hymnbook

#379 *Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing*
#274 *Because I Knew Not When My Life Was Good*
#275 *Amazing Grace*

Contemporary

Prayer for the City by Tore Aas and Scott Smith
Forward in Faith (You Have Anointed Us) by David Wellington
King of the Nations by Graham Kendrick



Day 5—Middle East

By Rachel Turner

Read: Romans 4:20-21, Matthew 17:20-21

In our church in the Middle East, many more men than women have accepted Jesus as their Savior and been baptized. So over the past several years, we have been praying for the wives of these new believers to open their hearts and become Christians as well. For a long time we didn't see an answer to these prayers.

Then one day, I heard the great news that "Sara" had professed faith in Jesus and wanted to be baptized. My first response was disbelief. I even had to confess to God, "Lord, I never thought this would happen. She seemed to have no spiritual interest. But you have done just what I prayed many times that You would do. You have opened her heart, drawn her to Yourself, shown her the truth and love of Jesus Christ—things that only You could do."

My surprise and amazement at this answer to prayer made me question my faith. Had I prayed even with faith the size of a mustard seed? Maybe not in this instance. But now I remind myself of this answer to prayer almost daily and allow it to cause my small faith to grow.

Has God ever surprised you by answering a prayer that you have prayed? Let us not overlook these surprises. Let us retell the stories of answered prayer to ourselves again and again. In this way we can grow in faith and expectation. Now "Sara" prays for her two grown daughters that they also might believe and be saved. Again my first thought is, "It doesn't look likely." One is a young mother married to a conservative Muslim. The other has just graduated from college and seems to be caught up in the world of success and materialism. But I certainly will encourage and join "Sara" in her prayers. I will pray that God will again do what only He can do. And this time, as I remember how God surprised me in the past, I will pray with more faith and expectation.

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Deuteronomy 6:6-9
I Samuel 12:23-24
Jeremiah 33:3
Matthew 7:7-11
John 17:20-21

SUGGESTED PSALMS, HYMNS & SPIRITUAL SONGS

Trinity Hymnal:

#628 *Come, My Soul, Thy Suit Prepare*
#535 *O, the Deep, Deep Love of Jesus*
#345 *Glorious Things of Thee Are Spoken*

Bible Songs:

166 *O Come, My People, to My Law*
#247 *Better to Trust in the Lord*
#72 *O Children, Hither Do Ye Come*

The Hymnbook:

#16 *We Come Unto Our Fathers' God*
#477 *Put Forth, O God, Thy Spirit's Might*
#463 *Tell Me the Old, Old Story*

Contemporary

The Family Prayer Song (As For Me and My House) by Morris Chapman
Make Us One by Scott Smith
Seek Ye First by Karen Lafferty

Prayer Focus

For the people of the Middle East: For the protection of believers in the Middle East; for funds to plant new churches; for ministry opportunities to university students; for God to call entire Middle Eastern families to Himself; for God to give Middle Eastern believers the desire and courage to share their faith with others; for God to give the World Witness team in the Middle East wisdom and zeal for His work here; for Christ to awaken unsaved spouses through the love and compassion of Christian husbands/wives; for the planned book store, reading room and Sunday School programs that will take place in the new building.

For the Turner Family: For leading and provision for their family in their new ministry location in the Middle East; for continued language studies; for good health for their two sons; that they would grow in spirit, wisdom and truth.



Small Group Discussion Questions

1. Share with the group answers to prayer you have experienced in the last week, month, year.
2. Name some promises in the Bible. What is your favorite? How have you put it into action in your own life?
3. Share some Bible characters and situations where God answered prayer. How can you apply that principle today in your own life, situation?