

Lent Devotional

*FOLLOWING*  
*JESUS*  
*TO THE*  
*CROSS*



Asia-Pacific Regional Discipleship Ministry,  
Church of the Nazarene

KNPH





## Words of Recommendation

This Lenten devotional comes with my deep appreciation to the Regional SDMI Council and the contributors of each story. Lent is the period prior to Easter that we as Christ followers set aside for prayer, fasting and deeper reflection on the work of the cross in our lives and the world. It is my prayer and hope that this devotional guide will inspire you to be witnesses of the Christ and cause you to engage in the Mission of making Christlike disciples in your particular Jerusalem. May we join with Paul in saying:

“For Christ’s love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again”(2 Cor. 5:14-15). He is Risen!

**Dr. Mark Louw** (Regional Director)

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These stories of God’s amazing grace, taken from across the AP Region, are a timely reminder to us of the Father’s constant love, Christ’s efficacious sacrifice, and the Holy Spirit’s continued work in the world.

**Dr. Rob Fringer** (Australia & New Zealand Field Discipleship Coordinator)

Though small, this book is great for growing Christians’ faith during the Lent season. True stories of lives made new by the power of the cross help the reader to experience the meaning and the power of Jesus’ sacrifice, and to experience God’s big love.

**Rev. Natanael Harinoto** (SEALAND Field Discipleship Coordinator)

This book will let us know the importance of sharing our weaknesses. Through exposing and sharing our weaknesses in small groups, we will experience God's mercy and Christ's power. "Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me"(2 Corinthians 12:9 NIV).

**Rev. Jun Kadota** (Japan National District Discipleship Coordinator)

This devotional book contains real life stories of deep devotion to God. Because these stories speak about obedience, sacrifice, and true discipleship, each entry enkindles hearts to love Jesus more dearly and follow him more nearly.

**Dr. Dick Eugenio** (Philippines & Micronesia Field Discipleship Coordinator)

This book contains most living stories of the transformational work of the Holy Spirit in the life of many heroes in faith. I trust that you will, surely, be empowered to live by the power of the cross as you read this book. God bless.

**Rev. Jubilee Thanga** (South East Asia Field Discipleship Coordinator)

This devotional is recommended as part of a history of lives touched by the love and work of Jesus Christ, making Christlike disciples. It is with great honour and appreciation that I recommend this devotional to you, as an individual, as a family or church. May your life(lives) be inspired by the love of the Holy Spirit.

**Rev. Aggie Muaror** (Melanesia & South Pacific Field Discipleship Coordinator)

## Preface

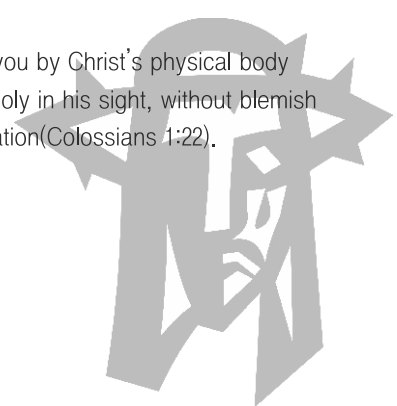
Lent is a great time to quiet the noise around us and really focus on Him. In this small booklet, written by our people in Asia-Pacific Region, and collected by the field discipleship coordinators, you will see God working through the lives of ordinary people to achieve His ultimate aim, our salvation, and to meet our needs through His unfailing love and faithfulness.

For each day of Lent, there is a story of what God has done in the life of an individual, plus a reflection and a prayer request worked by Rev. Sherry Shmidt at APNTS.

We invite you to join us over the next 40 days by seeking to prepare your heart for the celebration of Christ's resurrection. This year, in the 40 days leading up to the celebration of Easter, we want to focus intentionally on our need for Him and the beauty of how greatly He meets that need. You may know that God is faithful to meet those who wish to know and experience Him in a deeper, more intimate way.

**Rev. John Eun Yup Kim** (Regional Discipleship Coordinator)

But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body  
through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish  
and free from accusation (Colossians 1:22).





## A New Calling

There are times when God calls people who are already very stable in their careers. Doctor Dante and his wife Doctor Nietz are practicing medical doctors. In 2006, after a series of challenges in life, they decided to take God more seriously than ever before. Pastor Cryz faithfully visited their home, conducting Bible studies that lasted until past midnight, because they were on fire for the Word of God. From that time on their lives would never be the same. They knew they were not only called to be students of the Word; they were called to be practitioners of love and service.

Dante and Nietz started to conduct free medical check-ups every Sunday, coming to the local church 2 hours earlier than the service in order to cater to people in need. They also gave out free medicines. In partnership with other doctors, they organized medical and dental crusades. By ministering as doctors both Dante and Nietz were already serving God and others. When God called, He did not take their profession from them; instead, He added more to their service. This was not a case of change, but addition.

Dante died in 2011 of kidney failure, but he died having blessed many people within and outside the church. His life of sacrificial service and thirst for growth in the grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ is unparalleled. He is always remembered for his gracious smile and outspoken love for Jesus. Doctor Nietz continued to pursue and obey God's call after her husband's death. She is now teaching at Korea Nazarene University as a full-time faculty. Her mission and aspiration is to educate young people about both medicine and Jesus Christ. (Philippines & Micronesia Field)

## Reflection

God calls men and women to serve Him in accordance with their gifts. When God called Moses, He asked him, "What is that in your hand?" (Exodus 4:2). When God called Paul, the learned and Roman Pharisee, He wanted to reach out to a broader audience (Acts 9:15). When God changed Zacchaeus, he made his wealth available to many (Luke 19:8).

When God called Dante and Nietz, He knew their hearts and skills. God used what they already had in their hands in order to be fruitful in the kingdom. Their lives should be an example of serving God wherever we work. God's call does not always involve dislocating us from where we are. Is He calling you to be right where you are, in order to bring the gospel to those you already know?

## Prayer Requests

Today, let us pray for the many Nazarenes in the Philippines–Micronesia Field, that they might be disciple–makers in their schools, offices, work places or neighborhood. May they have a great thirst for God and be willing to be used by Him. Pray especially for young professionals, that they might become beacons of hope and grace to others; and may they be protected from temptations in order to be salt and light to the world.

## Sung Min, the Jesus Rapper

Nam, Sung Min was born into a Nazarene pastor's family. His father began a church plant where they met in a basement. With low attendance and ensuing poverty, his parents sent him to live with his grandmother. Now they could devote more time to developing the church. But by adolescence Sung Min was questioning his faith, "Does God really exist?" He struggled with his belief in God, and began blaming Him for his family's struggles. This led to fighting and misbehaving in school, getting him in trouble with his teachers, even to the point of calling his parents in to see the teacher. For disrupting the service, the church too, banished him. Depressed by all this, he wished to disappear and prayed every night: "Lord, if you really are with me, please let me be in heaven when I open my eyes after this sleep."

One day he went to a pastor's kids retreat and was able to make friends with others undergoing the same difficulties he was experiencing. The dedicated pastors there understood the young people's situations, leading Sung Min to open his heart. When he sang a song, tears began falling from Sung Min's eyes. He raised his hands up in the air, singing: "To be pleasing You, pleasing you, this is all I really wanna do!" He just kept shouting to the Lord with this one thing, to please Him. Experiencing this peace and joy for the first time, Sung Min knew that God really did exist. However, even though he made a promise to live a spiritual life, there were no changes in his reality: remaining in poverty, having the same previous friends, and repeating the same sins. He became exhausted with his unchanged life even after the retreat, where he had prayed and cried out to the Lord asking for forgiveness. His prayers were clouded with thoughts like, "God will not love a person like me." To which God one day replied, "I do love you." In response to God's word, he believed, and declared Jesus as master of his life.

Now Sung Min does his best to share the good news. He is currently an

evangelist, studying theology at Nazarene Theological Seminary, and as a team leader of the “Jesus Movement.” As a rapper, he spreads the love of Christ all around the world, through ministries and secular concerts. He composes music and makes the albums that contain the gospel message of Jesus, who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. This is the story of one church evangelist, a rapper David, who loves Jesus and spreads the His love with anyone who will listen. (Korea National District)

### Reflection

Many young people, unable to live the life they want to live for Jesus, close their hearts to the love God wants to pour out on them. They feel unworthy and unable to live the Christian life, so they turn away. Thankfully, many are rescued at the right time by someone showing unconditional love and understanding. Will you be that “someone” this week for that lost young person? “Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins”(1 Peter 4:8).

### Prayer Requests

Pray for the youth of our churches that they will not lose heart, but find God’s love through His people. Ask God to open your eyes to a young person needing someone to see them and to hear their unspoken cry. Then love them.





## No Turning Back from Jesus

Daw Machit and U Saw are new believers and first converts from both of their families. They lived a village, located in a small island of Muktama river in Mon State. They came to Christ after the Nazarene vocational pastor regularly visited their village and taught the Bible on every Saturday. When the couple decided to worship Jesus only, they stopped giving alms and offering to their monks as well as celebrating Buddhist festivals. It became very obvious and was recognized by the village leaders and the head monk. One day, the head monk and village leaders came to their house and warned them to be faithful to their native religion and bring offerings to them. If not, they told them they would not be allowed to live in the village. It was very difficult situation because Daw Machit was pregnant and about to deliver a baby soon. The husband and wife prayed together to remain steadfast in their new faith in Jesus. Finally, they informed the head monk and the village leaders that they had decided to worship Jesus alone and join the Christians. As a result, some radical leaders came and destroyed their house. They were also expelled from the village with empty hands, not able to take anything with them. As it was a very urgent situation, the pastor and some believers evacuated the family and provided temporary house. Now, they are working on the farm of a Christian, and opening a new church in even in their temporary house. The couple are hosting other new believers in their home, and worshipping the Lord joyfully with their one-year-old son every Sunday. (SouthEast Asia Field)

### Reflection

Jesus never promised an easy road when following Him. He told us, "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will save it"(Luke 9: 23 –24). What about you? Think of your home and friends, are you ready to lose what you have to gain Jesus, the only One worth having? Jesus promises life for us all. Take the life He will give you.

### Prayer Requests

Pray for this family in Myanmar and all the families who follow Christ in Buddhist areas that the Lord will give them strength when faced with persecution. Pray that the Buddhist people in those areas where Christians minister to them, that they will see Jesus and come to him.



## Never Give Up

Pastor Kirdi began studying at Indonesian Nazarene Theological College in Yogyakarta, struggling and working hard to divide his time between work and study. He and his wife soon had a son, and a strong faith in the Lord. They experienced joy and were convinced the Lord would never fail his people. After graduation, he worked in the INTC educational program. In answer to their prayer, a daughter was born to them and the pastor began his master's program. They continued to trust and thank the Lord for his compassionate love.

One day his wife complained of a small swelling in her right breast, but she didn't feel sick. They went along like this for several months until they decided to have it checked by the lab. They were surprised and shocked that the results showed malignant cancer—stage three. They were both saddened and hit hard by this news. Their faith severely tried, they kept believing in God's love.

Through the operation and times of treatment, God continued to help them. He provided for the hospital expense and chemotherapy treatment, but the cancer kept spreading. Finally his wife had to have a second operation. From this point the growth of the cancer could not be controlled, and grew until attacking her liver. Though very saddened, Pastor Kirdi said that, "God showed His love to them, letting her go to be with our Heavenly Father." The children felt the loss of their mother every day. She had been with them all the time, teaching them, guiding and loving them.

As a family, though grieved in their loss, they did not give up. They remembered and testified to the compassionate love of God through the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus on the cross. They believed that the suffering they experienced could not compare with God's great love.

So the rest of time on this earth, while there is opportunity, their desire is

to go forward, full of faith that God's plans are good! Pastor Kirdi is comforted knowing that his wife is in eternal peace with our Father in Heaven.

After their mother died his children have increasingly become strong to stand, more mature in how they think and act. He continues to praise the Lord, and says that this is all because of the love and sacrifice of our Lord Jesus for us all. (Sealand Field)

### Reflection

"The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning"(Lamentations 3:22–23). Life's hardships can never take away the love of the Lord. Are you able to believe in God's love and goodness, through all life's storm and losses?

### Prayer Requests

Pray for making us steadfast in the power and the love of the Lord. Pray also for strengthening our faith to be a light shining in a dark world, leading others to Him—a place of refuge in the time of storm. Pray that we always trust and never give up on trusting in His unfailing love.

## Katsuma Ose's Blessing

It has been several years since the Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami occurred on the same day, March 11, 2011, a day when it was gently snowing as if nothing earth shattering had hit the ground below. Since that day, as Katsuma Ose looks back, he testifies that he has been helped, taught, blessed, and led by God. It all began when the Urawa Nazarene church, started their restoration assistance. During the first year the church helped to open the affected roads, scraped mud and distributed relief supplies for the victims of the earthquake.

Katsuma joined the project, which mainly focused on mending fishermen's tools, during the second year. The third year they started the 'Nazarene film club' for those who still had to live in the temporary housing. As he was posting the flyers, one tapestry at the entrance of the house caught his attention. It was colored pink, with Thank You for Your Blessing written on it with a drawing of an owl with big eyes. It turned out to be a dwelling belonging to a fisherman who had lost almost everything including his house and ship. Katsuma asked himself, "What would cause him to hang such a message?"

In talking to the owner of the house Katsuma was astonished. The owner said, "Yes, it's true, I lost many things. But many people lost their loved-ones. We, however, were saved. As long as we are alive, everything will be alright, so I have hung the tapestry. Indeed, thank you for your blessing is true." He added that he used to feel "he was alive," however, after experiencing the Tsunami and earthquake, he learned he had been "allowed to live." It amazed Katsuma that many people there spoke of the same feeling as that man expressed. (Japan National District)

### Reflection

Instead of feeling sad that he lost so much and could no longer do the things he used to do, this man thanked the Lord for his blessings. Perhaps you are facing loss and unexpected hardships in your life. What will you do with the life you have left? Will you give thanks to the Lord in all circumstances? Paul says, “I have learned to be content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do everything through him who gives me strength” (Philippians 4: 12b–13).

### Prayer Requests

Let us pray that the church in Japan will continue to serve God and their neighbor as needs arise from the storms of life. Pray that the Lord Jesus will be lifted up as the followers of Jesus show his kindness and love. Pray for those who have experienced great loss in the recent storms that have hit Japan.



## A Life Spared

Joan remembers her life as always being associated with the church. Her family always used to drive down to her grandparent's home for morning service with the Methodist minister from Mundubbera. Joan was christened there with all her mother's family.

When she was about 12 years old, the Nazarene church came to Eidsvold. The minister drove out to meet them in their home. As a result, they started to attend Sunday School and church in Eidsvold with the Hamilton's and the pastors, Mr and Mrs Lee. She became a member and has been with the Nazarene church ever since.

Her family has a tradition of celebrating everyone's 80th birthdays with a big party of friends and family. It was so enjoyable! When she was in her early seventies, she was diagnosed with a serious lung disease. She was very upset to realise that she might not reach her 80's, and thus miss her big celebration. However, God is good and provided help to control the disease through the medical world. She takes medication three times every day and sees a specialist every 6 months. She praises the Lord for the way He has sustained her and given her good health so that she was able to enjoy her big 80th birthday party.

She remembers her mother also praising God for the extra years she was given after being diagnosed with bowel cancer. She had two big operations which were successful; she was cured! Years later, she passed away(not from disease) at the age of 86.

Joan and her husband and are grateful to still be living in their own home and praying and doing what they can in the Lord's work. She and her husband thank the Lord for His love and watchful care over them. (Australia & New Zealand Field)

## Reflection

Unexpected illnesses can sometimes threaten to ruin our dreams. We are not given the guarantee of a long life. But God always hears our prayers! He always loves us and never leaves us. Though the answer may not be what we were longing for, we can rest assured God is merciful and wise. Our story is wrapped up in His story and the coming of His kingdom on earth. He loves to give good gifts to His children. In fact, it says in Psalm 35:27, "The Lord be exalted, who delights in the well-being of his servant." Just as it was good for Joan and her husband to praise God for his goodness and precious gift of life to her, we can praise Him for who He is even when our prayers are not answered the way we hoped. Christ came into the world to reach the lost. We are a part of His dream to reach all the nations for Him. What can you praise the Lord for today? Who can you pray for that hasn't yet found their way to Him?

## Prayer Requests

Pray for the Australia North and South District that they may see the harvest field that God is showing them. And that the Holy Spirit will move hearts toward Himself as the people of the churches reach out to them.





## Being crucified with Christ

Being a pastor's kid, Roy grew up knowing the realities of the ministry, along with its victories and challenges. His dad was a former business man who felt and obeyed God's call to full-time ministry. With his very supportive wife, his parents started planting churches. Their passion and commitment to God's call, however, left a bad impression upon Roy's maturing mind. He did not understand why his father sold their car in order to raise funds for a church building. He did not understand why they needed to travel a long way to a local church every Sunday. He did not understand why his dad had to continue to preach while his mom was having a miscarriage. He kept going to church with his family, but his heart was not committed to even the idea of religion.

Unfortunately, when it rains it pours. Later in his teens Roy was diagnosed with what's called Ankylosing Spondylitis. His immune system was so abnormally active, affecting primarily the bones in his lower body. He suffered pain every day, and he limped when he walks. He could not even eat breakfast because his medicines make him throw up. In order to help stabilize his nerves, he needed 2000 dollars per month for a single injection, which his family did not have.

All of these experiences would have excused Roy if he started hating God. People would have understood him if his pain ironically anaesthetized him of the notion of God's love. He could have heard Satan's tempting whispers, "Curse God and die" (Job 2:9). His response, however, was similar to Job's: "Should we accept from God only good and not trouble?" (Job 2:10). In fact, much to his own surprise, Roy said "Yes" to God's call to the ministry. He has been a valuable youth pastor since then to a youth group of a nearly 200 members. (Philippines & Micronesia Field)

## Reflection

Roy's story is an amazing story of transformation of heart and mind. His obedient "Yes" to God requires him now to make the same sacrifices that he had not understood his father did. He still struggles to even walk, but he goes where he is needed by God. Transformation and obedience can happen even to someone whose background and life experiences are challenging. Like Paul, Roy met Jesus Christ, who radically changed his life goals and trajectory. He no longer lives for himself. Instead, he confesses, "I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me" (Gal 2:20). Will you pick up your cross today and follow wherever he calls?

## Prayer Requests

Let us pray for the people we know are struggling today for many reasons. The Philippines is full of them. Our local churches have teens from broken or violent homes and living in abject poverty. But there might be other Roy's in these local churches who are being prepared by God for His work in the vineyard. Pray for the pastors and youth leaders, that they might have discernment to counsel these chosen ones. Jewels can come from unpolished stones buried in mud.

## From Ruins to Restoration

In Rye Kim and her husband Rev. Hyun Ho Kim graduated from Asia-Pacific Nazarene Theological seminary, in the Philippines, in 1997 and then returned to Korea. They were seeking to pastor a church but could not find one. For a while, they were serving as an assistant pastor in a small church and received a very low salary. They were forced to get furniture, such as a sofa and a wardrobe, and electronics, such as a refrigerator and washing machine, from places where those things were discarded.

Sometimes they could not afford to buy toilet tissue. In Rye Kim collected coins and went to market to buy the toilet tissue where her daughter brought her a cookie box, asking her to buy it for her. She felt sad for her daughter because she could not buy it. Her daughter was disappointed and kept crying all the while they were walking together from the market to their home. For 2 years they lived like that. She struggled and lamented, "What is the meaning of a life like this? What is God's plan for us?" Her soul was so weary.

During those days, her husband, pastor Kim went to a mountain near to their house and prayed every night for 40 days on the mountain. After 40 days of prayer, he began to fast and pray for another 10 days. God poured His grace out upon him during the fasting and showed him a vision. It was from chapter 58 of the book of Isaiah saying that he would "rebuild the ancient ruins and raise up the age-old foundations; you will be called Repairer of Broken Walls, Restorer of Streets with Dwellings."

These words from the vision gave them the assurance that this 2-year period of their lives was like the period of 40 years in the wilderness for the Israelites, whom God humbled and trained for making the people his servants. Now they are pastoring with joy at Shin Won church of the Nazarene in E-Chun city. God never fails. (Korea National District)

## Reflection

When God calls us to follow Him, He never promises to make the road easy or the way smooth. At times, we follow Him in the path of suffering. He has promised, "Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you," (Luke 11:9–10). He is inviting us to seek Him out, as pastor Kim did when he went to the mountain to pray. He longs for us to be in communion with Him, to trust Him, and pray to Him. So, today, won't you begin the search for Him? Wait on Him; seek him and you will find Him.

## Prayer Requests

Pray for those in ministry in Korea who may be going through trials and discouragement, that the Holy Spirit will sustain them and give them strength to stand. Pray that the church will support each other in prayer seeking God till they find Him.

## No matter what it cost to serve the Lord

Pastor Tin had a wonderful spouse and children who dearly loved the Lord Jesus. Pastor Tin's family was the first fruit of the Nazarene Mission work in Myanmar. Originally, pastor Tin was born in Buddhist's monk family. His grandfather was a well-known monk, his uncle and aunt are monks till today. When Pastor Tin and his family accepted Jesus as their personal Savior and were baptized, the whole family of Pastor Tin was shocked. Consequently, they were expelled and excommunicated from both sides of their family. They were not allowed to work in any family or relative's farms. They lost their relatives as well as their jobs and lived in poverty with 2 little children. A Nazarene family hosted them to live on their property and work in their rubber farm. God blessed their family in their daily life. Pastor Tin served as a lay pastor in the church, worked in the rubber farm, and his wife made local bread and snacks to sell in the local market. Some years later, God blessed them to have a new house for their family.

While they were serving the Lord wholeheartedly, and expecting a new baby, it was discovered that his wife had breast cancer. With their savings and the help of the Nazarene congregations, they were able to deliver the baby safely; but the mother passed away as a result of her cancer. When life seemed hopeless, the hands of Jesus took hold and strengthened Pastor Tin. He worked hard to take care of his three children. Today he is giving the love and care of father and mother to his children. Miraculously, Pastor Tin enrolled into SEANBC extension class and holds a district preacher's license. He remembered the wish of his wife, before she died, was for him to be a full-time and ordained minister. Now, Pastor Tin is an assistant pastor in Mon State. (SouthEast Asia Field)

### Reflection

Jesus gave us beautiful words in the beatitudes when he spoke of those who are blessed. He said, “Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted”(Matthew 5:4). The peace and comfort God gives is like no other that we can receive on earth. He is a good Father like Pastor Tin, and cares for his children. Psalms says that, “The Lord delights in those who fear him, who put their hope in His unfailing love”(Psalms 147: 11). When life seems hopeless, Jesus is the one who will care for us.

### Prayer Requests

Pray for all those enrolled in our seminaries and Bible schools, who come to prepare to serve the Lord. Many come with past and current heavy family loads to bear. Pray that God will share their load and give them of His peace, joy, and strength.



## A Life Changed

Samuel was adopted by a minister's family and raised to be a Christian. However, as a teenager he walked away from it all, instead choosing a lifestyle of gambling, smoking, free sex, stealing, partying, and bringing shame to God and his family.

Samuel married three times, to girls from other religious backgrounds. He divorced both of his first two wives and had no children with them. He and his third wife had two children, but his destructive lifestyle continued on. Their home was full of anger and brokenness. They knew no peace.

Nearing Easter 2010 Samuel became very ill with a very serious hemorrhage. His hemoglobin count dropped to 3, but since he went to the hospital on Friday he had to wait the entire weekend to receive a six-liter blood transfusion. Samuel prayed, he pleaded for God to give him another chance to live. "I will throwaway all of my bad habits," he said. Four days later Samuel was able to come home, a healed man. The doctor told Samuel that his life was a miracle.

Since then Samuel has never stopped thanking God for His amazing love. Finally, Samuel understood that Jesus died to free him from the power of sin; that precisely because of Jesus' resurrection Samuel had new hope and victory. Samuel is living a new life; the old has been thrown away. His wife and two children now believe in Jesus. Samuel and his wife renewed their wedding vows in the church. Samuel is a board member in the Church of the Nazarene; his wife serves on the prayer team; his two children are involved in the church's music ministry. Their lives are a vivid witness to God's love and power in the use of their financial blessings. Samuel's changed life overflows with thankfulness to God.

For Samuel and his family, Easter is all about repentance and salvation.  
(Sealand Field)

### Reflection

The power of the resurrection is able to change any life. The love and power of God reaches into the darkest places on earth. Jesus said to Martha after the death of Lazarus, “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?”(John 11:25–26). The power of the resurrection is able to transform the darkness into His wonderful light. Do you believe in the power of the resurrection for your life today? For the lives of those you are praying for?

### Prayer Requests

Pray for the men and women who are wandering away from the Lord that He would seek and find them. Pray with a renewed faith in the resurrection that God is able to save all who are broken and lost.



## Alive to Tell the Story

In June 2017, Pastor Yuzo Morimoto of Honcho Church of the Nazarene in Japan received an unexpected diagnosis of malignant prostate cancer. There were 21 are as of metastasis of the cancer in the pelvis, spine, ribs and clavicle; and spread throughout the lymph nodes. His PSA, prostate specific antigen, tumor marker was 233, (normal is 0-4). Surgery and radiation therapy could not be done. There was only hormonal therapy to consider, with the 5-year survival rate of 35%. Until the cancer notification was received, he was living a normal life like everyone else. However, from that day onward every day was full of fear and darkness, anxiety and tears, crying and depression.

One night, while stopping in traffic at the signal, he shouted and prayed to God, finally crying out, "Please, Lord, please help!" Not noticing the signal had turned green, he had to quickly step on the accelerator. Sometimes, like a child, he cried on his wife's shoulder. However, within one month, he began to notice a change in his outlook. He really took in the beauty of the lush green landscape on the banks of the river. He noticed the water birds resting their feathers, then flying again to the sky. Every moment became beautiful, seeing God's world afresh and anew. From the time he desperately prayed to God at the traffic signal, something had begun to change. He wondered if it was a mistake to live with our plans made for when we are older. He wanted to begin and end each day aware that life may end that day, so he woke up with the morning sun in order to fully experience life. The prayers he prayed sometimes became prayers of repentance. God was near. He had tests and treatments of injections with hormone therapy regularly. Experiencing God's mysterious indescribable touch during one test, he knew God had his hand on his life.

After over a year since the onset, the cancer markers declined, showing in only 2 places in his bones. His PSA tumor marker decreased to a lower

value of 0.03. In all these miraculous results he gives praise to the healing of the Lord. He hopes to continue working as a pastor in his church and as a professor at the Nazarene Seminary in Japan. He affirms that he will continue to walk in the light of the Lord with thanksgiving in his heart, and obey the Lord as his servant. (Japan National District)

### Reflection

God gives us life abundantly! Have you opened your eyes to see what He has put in your path for you today? Can you see his creative work in your life? “The eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and his ears are attentive to their cry”(Psalm 34:15).

### Prayer Requests

Let us pray that the pastors and teachers of our churches and schools in Japan have the blessing of the Lord on their life when the trials of life come their way.

## Something Missing

Christine grew up not knowing why but she felt something was missing and that she would never be good enough. She felt she would never be smart, sporty, thin, pretty, or fashionable enough to be fully accepted by friends and peers. Leaving school, she tried to find acceptance through partying, alcohol, and mixing with the ‘wrong’ crowd. This continued until a negative experience brought her to a sudden halt. In those quiet few days after this experience, she heard a strong clear voice telling her to choose—either continue travelling this downward spiral or turn the other way. Today she knows that the voice was God, but she didn’t want to recognise Him at the time. Regardless, at the age of 22 she decided to make changes. Four years later she graduated as a nurse.

Keeping busy with work, travel, study, and living life, the years passed yet the feeling of something missing remained. This led her to studying transcendental meditation, Buddhism, Taoism, atheism, Tai Chi, tarot cards, paganism, druids and witchcraft. She finally tried to find that missing something by buying “stuff” which only led to a lot of debt.

Three years ago, for reasons she couldn’t explain, Christine started watching Christian television sermons and listening to Christian radio. She knew without a doubt this was the something she had been looking for. After asking Jesus into her life she followed another ‘urge’ to clean house. Books and items that didn’t support her new life went. Wanting to get closer to God, she prayed often and for a second time clearly heard that same voice, from years previous, telling her she needed to forgive; to forgive herself as well as others. This wasn’t easy but it was done. God brought peace, love, and acceptance into her life. She has found a church to be a part of, and was baptised. (Australia & New Zealand Field)

## Reflection

The wonder of the gospel is that God seeks us before we even know who He is or begin to turn in His direction. It is Jesus who searches for us as were member from Luke 19:10, "For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost." He knows our every need and loves us so much, He came to die for us that we might have life. He does not leave us alone, but like a good shepherd goes out into the world to search for His lost sheep. Who can you identify among your friends and associates who are lost and need the Saviour? What can you do to reach out to them and be Jesus to them? He is seeking those who are lost. Maybe you feel lost today. Just trust in the Son of Man who came looking for you...and found you.

## Prayer Requests

Today pray that those who are lost in the New Zealand district will be found by Jesus. Pray that the churches will be involved in the search and welcome with open arms those who are lost.

## A Sacrificial Gift

In preparation for her sixth birthday, Heloise was saving up so she could buy whatever she wanted. Her daddy promised her that if she was able to save enough money, he would add whatever amount she needed to buy the pink bicycle she has been praying for. Throughout the year, she dropped coins after coins in her piggy bank. She filled it almost to the brim, which delighted her daddy. She really did a good job saving. For a little child with a very sweet tooth, this was not easy to do, also because a mini-store was just a few steps away from their house.

Her daddy helped her open her piggy bank on Sunday morning (two days after her birthday), in order to buy the bicycle after church. There was such joy in her heart as a tiny hill of coins was formed on the floor. While they were counting the money, her daddy casually mentioned that the Alabaster offering was being collected at their local church on the same day. He told the story of woman who broke her precious alabaster jar and poured the contents as a gift to Jesus. He explained that the Alabaster offering would help build churches, schools and hospitals because there are many less fortunate families and children around the world.

Little did her daddy know, conviction has been growing in his daughter's heart during their conversation. When her dad asked if she would be willing to give her savings as an offering, she said, "Yes," in a blink. When her daddy asked, "Are you sure?" She said, "Yes, other children need this money more than I need it. Their new clothes are more important than me having a new bike." She walked to the offering basket that morning to give her first ever Alabaster offering. She did not get the bike, but she gained a generous heart. Since then, every Sunday at church, she would always ask her dad for money to give as an offering. (Philippines & Micronesia Field)

## Reflection

Like the woman who did not really know the impact of her actions, which was actually to prepare for Jesus' burial(Mark 14:8), Heloise will probably never know the impact of her sacrifice. One thing is certain, Jesus honored the woman who gave her sacrificial offering, and so will He honor Heloise's gift(Mark 14:9). The amount may not be too large, but because she gave her all, she has given much more than many others (Mark 12:43–44). "She has done a beautiful thing to me,"(Mark 14:6). Have you broken any alabaster jars lately?

## Prayer Requests

God speaks to little children, and they are also enabled by the Holy Spirit to respond in obedience. Today, let us pray for the children that our local churches are ministering to throughout the Philippines–Micronesia Field. Pray that the teachers will take their ministry seriously, aware that they are shaping minds pliable to God's words. Pray that children will learn to reach out to their peers. Pray that they will learn obedience and sacrifice even in their tender minds.

## All Things Together for Good

Pastor Kim, Sang Beom is a pastor of a small church in Korea. Before he began his pastoral ministry, he experienced God's grace leading to his life as a church planter. In 1997, when he was serving as a licensed minister, he married his beloved wife. In 1998, he was so happy and pleased when God gave him a beautiful daughter. However, from the 100th day of their daughter's life, her skin became chapped covering her whole body. The disease did not improve but became worse, going deeper and deeper.

They took her to the dermatologist of Hangang Hospital to diagnose and treat the skin with the best doctors, but heard discouraging words from the specialist. "I have been treating skin diseases as a dermatologist for a long time, and only saw one case as severe as your child's. I treated that child, but was not able to cure it." Pastor Kim lost hope when he heard those words. It was a very difficult reality to think of his daughter living in suffering from this terrible skin disease for her entire life.

The endless process of disinfecting and working on the daughter's skin, which is actually cracking and dying every day, was hard to bear in the eyes of both parents. It was devastating to think of the child suffering in this way every day. In this situation, he felt he could no longer be in the field of ministry, he resigned his assistant pastorship, and took a sabbatical of 100 days in prayer. He began to climb the mountain every night to pray. Nothing was able to prevent him from climbing up even if there were heavy rains. Near the end of the 100 days of prayer, God gave him this inspiring message. "Pastor Kim, plant a church for me," and the following words were short and simple, "Be thankful!"

He screamed before God, and cried out to him like this, "In my condition You expect me to plant a church and be grateful?" But God's Holy Spirit touched him and he confessed in the next moment, "I will obey the Word of

God and start a new church.” With God, who gave him strength in his very difficult circumstances, he began a new church, he preached the Gospel, and prayed for lonely and alienated people. In the meantime, God gave him the grace to understand the souls of sick people through the suffering of his daughter. He grew to realize God had given him the platform of pain and suffering in order to better understand the suffering of souls, pray for them and bear their pain along with them.

Meanwhile, God had begun to cure and restore his sick daughter when he concentrated on the ministry; and today she is cleansed. Nobody noticed that his child was sick. They learned of it only when he testified that God had healed, restored, and cleansed her. He testifies that all of this was God’s work, and gives him the praise. Hallelujah! (Korea National District)

### Reflection

Together, let us praise God who intervenes in our lives today, and makes all things work together to achieve good. In what ways in your life can you find that “God is working for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose?”(Romans 8:28). Will you trust His love and obey His voice, even when you can’t see His purpose?

### Prayer Requests

Let us pray for the pastors in Asia Pacific who are struggling with their personal family situations while serving the family of God. Let us pray that God will meet their needs surrounding them with his love and power.



## An Amazing Change

Nguyễn Phú'ong Trang, born in a Vietnamese Buddhist family, learned from a young age go to the pagoda, listen to Buddha's teaching, study well, and obey her parents. Thus, they would be blessed. But answered prayer for happiness and peace, eluded them. Grief struck her family at age six when her father took another woman. He abused her mother because she found out he was cheating. Then he threatened to kill her with a butcher knife, followed by crushing her with abuse. Was there no one to help them nor any god who could answer their prayers?

Upon learning of Nguyễn father's unfaithfulness, his business associates stopped doing business with him, leading him to bankruptcy. As Nguyễn grew, the shocks from her childhood led her into rebellious ways: hurting others, pretending to be tough to avoid being oppressed like her mother, and closing herself up to all relationships leading to depression.

In the summer after 5th grade, she went to a Christian youth camp. She felt uncomfortably out of place, with everyone being so friendly. The second night after games and bible study, the pastor asked if she wanted to accept Jesus as her God. She said, "No, I'm a Buddhist." Then the pastor said, "it is ok, God respects your decision and he will wait for you, but can you make him wait?" After a few seconds of silence, something inside her made her answer, "I will believe." She attended the church for one year, but after no change or answers to prayer, she left, with her depression at an all time low. She gave her teachers a difficult time and was stressed knowing she went against her family's religion. Later, she returned to the church for guitar lessons. God began working through the Bible study and classmates miraculously. The love of God broke through, healing her wounds and filling the void in her soul. She opened up to fellowship with Him, and found a perfect Father for her life.

Her desire grew to serve her heavenly Father. The love of the church family softened her to receive and give love and tenderness toward others. She has forgiven others and witnessed her family situation change. God has answered her prayers. She thanks Him for giving her a place to serve: a position she never dreamed of, teaching children about Him and helping with the youth. She is grateful that He journeys with her. (SouthEast Asia Field)

### Reflection

God seeks out those who aren't looking for him. There is such profound truth in the familiar passage of John 3:16, "God so loved the world that he sent his only son...". Praise Him for choosing you to be his disciple—for loving you so much, he sent his only Son to find you. Let us join Him in seeking the lost.

### Prayer Requests

Pray that God will send more workers into the field so more churches will be available to open their doors for whom Jesus came to die.

## A Sacrificial Gift

In a simple home outside of the busy city life, Harun lived in darkness, knowing nothing of Christ. At one point he learned the truth and began to live in God's light. Over the years since then life has had its challenges.

He was sick a lot in 2014 and 2015. Then in 2016, he was inspired and impressed with the importance of the cross at the midweek service. He decided to use a cross to crucify his selfish desires and inward focus. He made a one-meter-tall wooden cross from used wood and whatever materials he could find. It was hollow with four sides. That cross was not impressive to look at; it wasn't painted or polished and smooth or perfectly put together.

After that every day when he cooked rice, he took a handful of that rice in the form of money Rupiah 1,000(8 cents) and set it aside. He did this every day for one year, beginning and ending on Easter.

Also, he did the same with the side dishes. Every day he set aside a minimum of Rupiah 2,000(16 cents). It was never less than that, and if he got more money, then he set aside more. He put the paper money in the wooden cross.

Harun impressed on his wife also that perhaps she needed to give, too. He suggested that since she eats every day she also could give. When he asked her, "How much would that be?" she responded, "Rupiah 20,000 (\$1.80)." So every month they put Rupiah 20,000 inside the wooden cross.

The first cross was ready for Easter of 2017. The next year they continued the same practice by giving the cross to the Lord on Easter 2018. His desire has been to crucify his tendency toward selfishness. You may wonder why he would do it in this way. He says that every day God gives him food to eat. He had never thought about evangelism before the Lord found him, when he was so hard in his heart. But evangelists shared the

good news with him, therefore, he wanted to share his money so others could hear the good news. (Sealand Field)

### Reflection

Brother Harun carried his cross with paper money and the plastic container full of coins to church and gave them in the Easter WEF offerings for two years. He has prepared his 2019 cross out of PVC pipe to carry on the same tradition. It continues to remind him of those who gave their lives unselfishly so he could hear the good news. Now he can share the good news with others. "God loves a cheerful giver"(2 Corinthians 9:7). When we set our eyes on Jesus, we lose sight of all besides. Like Brother Harun, is there something you can let go of so God can have all of you? Is there anything you can part with for the love of Jesus during this Lenten season?

### Prayer Requests

Pray for the churches in Asia that they will continue to evangelize the cities and country-side with the good news of Jesus.



## In dying, I live

Reo praises the name of God for his care over him. Last summer he went to Tokyo where he was just getting accustomed to his new job when, for the first time in his life, he came close to death. He learned the importance of having faith.

One day, he felt sick from a bad case of gastroenteritis. He left work early and arrived back home on a very hot day. As he tried to rest his body, his hands and feet suddenly became numb and he could not move. His hand was hardened like a stone, and he could not push the buttons on his smart phone. Painful numbness spread over his whole body and became terrifying. Meanwhile, he was desperately trying to telephone the emergency line to get help.

During the 15 minutes before the ambulance arrived, Reo's pain and fear was the worst he'd ever experienced. He thought, "What if I die?" he cried out, "It's so painful. Why dear God?" Suddenly, he felt like he could see the way of this world and the way of heaven's path. He said to himself, "If I go to heaven, as it stands, there will be no more troubles from life on the earth, which is good. On the other hand, if I live, that too, will be good. Whichever way I go I will have God next to me, so, I am happy."

While thinking all this, and praying he found that he could breathe deeply and naturally. The body was numb and painful, but somehow there was peace in his heart. He could wait without panic. This was a great blessing. After being brought to the hospital, there was even greater grace. The brothers and sisters of the church came, and kept coming, to see Reo. This was impressive to a guy who lives alone. It made him realize again that they included him in their family, the family of God. Supported by prayer, he recovered quickly and was able to leave the hospital five days later.

"He who believes in me will live, even though he dies"(John 11:25b).

Reo discovered in the midst of a painful trial, the presence of the Lord. His Word and His people carried him through. For Christians, it is a great joy and hope to know that death is not dark. He wants to communicate this hope to as many people as possible while growing in Christ and trusting the way God provides. (Japan National District)

#### Reflection

While Paul was in prison, he was ready to live or to die for Christ. He said, “Christ will be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death. For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain”(Philippians 1:20b–21). Have the thoughts of death troubled you or someone you love? How can you comfort them in a loving way to rest in God’s care through the experience?

#### Prayer Requests

Pray that those in Christ who are suffering persecution this very hour will be surrounded by God’s love and strength. Pray that they will be reminded of the promises of God: that He will be near and never leave them, whether in life or in death. Pray for their peace and their joy so they will know “the help given by the Spirit of Jesus Christ”(Philippians 1:19).

## Saved to Serve

Rae grew up in a Christian home, went to church regularly, and believed God existed. However, as she reached her teen years, God seemed so distant to her. She didn't have any kind of personal relationship with Him, and Christianity felt like an ideal that she could never achieve. She went to youth group and Bible study, and while little bits of truth were absorbed, it never connected, and she felt like she had to hide her real self. Issues and incidents from her past had her convinced she was not good enough for God—that He could not be bothered with her. She left home at age 18 and found herself in a world that she thought she wanted. She was surrounded by toxicity dressed up as fun and freedom to live however she wanted, even if it meant hurting herself and others around her.

When she got pregnant at age 20, she knew she needed to try and mend the broken relationship with her parents. It took time, but they were so full of grace despite still feeling so much hurt. They invited Rae to come to the Christmas service at the Nazarene church they had been attending over the past two years. She was 4 months pregnant and unmarried. She felt nervous, but something told her to take the leap; she knew that there was a better life for her and her son than the one in which she was living. The church welcomed her with much love, compassion, friendship and support. God was just waiting for her to be ready to come back to Him. God had the people she needed ready to surround her and help her as she grew to know Him more, for the first time in her life. Both her family and her church family helped show her what walking in faith was really like, and what it truly meant to have a deep and personal relationship with Christ.

Rae's son is seven now, and she currently serves as the Youth and Young Adults Coordinator in that same church, as well as on the Australian Southern District Youth team, and in the local community partnering with youth leaders

from other churches. God is so good! Rae thanks God every day for the amazing work He has done in her life and will continue to do! (Australia & New Zealand Field)

### Reflection

There are times when our failures blind us and we cannot see the One who wants us to come out of hiding into his light of forgiveness and love. Let's be Jesus to those who are hiding from Him. "For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost" (Luke 19:10). Who is hurting in your world that you can give the love of Jesus to this day?

### Prayer Requests

Pray for the youth of Australia that they might be awakened to the unconditional love of Jesus, through his Holy Spirit and the church's spirit of love.



## Grace in Weakness

Bible Colleges are filled with students who come from different backgrounds and with various agendas. You meet all kinds of people there. Some students come without a purpose. Some are even sent by their parents because they think of the Bible School as a rehab that will straighten out their children. Some come with real calling and passion, and they persevere despite the financial and academic challenges they face.

In 1998, a new student enrolled for a Bachelor of Theology. He was one of the most highly appreciated students on campus. People know and call him as Popoy. In terms of writing papers and staying attentive to professors, he was absolutely hopeless. Because of his lower English proficiency, he probably didn't understand twenty percent of what professors talked about in the class. He was definitely not interested in memorizing jargons and analyzing theological propositions. He was actually more interested in playing basketball than engaging in class debates. Often, he would go directly to the basketball court in his full uniform—with necktie and formal shoes—after class.

But there was something unique about Popoy. He was very passionate about sharing the gospel to other people. He was also exceptional in memorizing Scripture verses in Tagalog. He was unmatched in the whole campus in this area. He also possessed an extremely relational personality, so it was easy to relate and listen to him. With all these, he would stand at the gate of the Bible school, conversing to anyone who would listen. When he got an audience, he would joyfully go on and on in sharing the Word.

By the abundant grace and mercy of his professors, Popoy managed to graduate with his Bachelor of Theology degree. Again, he did not do well academically, but that did not mean much to him. He did not count his limitations and used them as an excuse for not doing God's work well. He

knew all along that everything is, “Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit.” (Zechariah 4:6). (Philippines & Micronesia Field)

### Reflection

We all have weaknesses, but God's grace is sufficient (2 Corinthians 12:9). Our attitude should be like that of Paul who wrote: “I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong” (2 Corinthians 12:9–10). What weakness or limitation can you delight in today?

### Prayer Requests

Let us pray for our workers today. Let us pray that they will be used by God amidst their struggles and limitations. Let us pray that God's empowering grace will overflow in their lives, transforming them into mighty vessels of conversion and holiness. Many Filipinos might feel insecure when they compare themselves to other nations, but they are God's chosen instrument to spread the gospel of reconciliation.

## ‘Oh, Now I Can Go Home!’

Thirty nine year old Tannie, Mrs. Ha, Jun Hee was relieved by the fact that she could leave this world to be with the Lord in heaven. It was the day she was diagnosed with third stage breast cancer that had spread to the armpit. She stopped all her normal daily activities. While waiting for the anticancer treatments and surgery schedule, she began attending the dawn prayer meeting every day. She completed all the treatments taking over a year beginning every day with prayer.

However, heaven was still far away, and the war with her husband drinking every day in the house was endless even during the treatment. The process of anticancer treatment, surgery, radiation, target treatment, and examination was a time of peace. She walked through all this with the Lord, leaving the worry of the husband’s drunken behavior behind and holding on to the word of God. Three years of treatment were three years of prayer. After the treatments she returned to her daily routine, and even took on the job of a small group leader in her church. Her husband, who attended church during his childhood, wanted to be the group leader with her.

She also met with neighbors, who did not believe in Jesus, every Friday sharing food and God’s grace with them. When the group grew in God’s grace more deeply, the husband’s drunkenness became worse than before. “I have to get rid of this Jesus whom you believe in!” The rough language and treatment from her husband was very difficult to bear. She remembered how precious it was when her beloved parents worshipped God together freely, and longed for her own family life to be like theirs. She loved her two children yet wanting them to have a Christian family life. She knew that just as the early disciples were persecuted, and have been through the ages, so Christians are targeted today.

There was one scripture that became a lifeline to her: “Cast your cares on

the Lord and he will sustain you; he will never let the righteous fall”(Ps 55:22). She prayed, “Lord, I am a sinner like my husband, and I thank you for covering my transgressions with Your blood, and for making me righteous. The Lord, who does not allow the righteous to fall, is present in this storm, and I am not shaken. I am safe here now. I leave all these things in the hands of the Lord. The only difference between my husband and me is that Jesus, the Savior and the Life, is with me. Oh, come Jesus to my husband and have mercy on him.”

Her prayers for her husband reached heaven. He began attending worship services every Sunday and now is also attending the small group that meets every Friday. Today she sees the Lord she trusted with her life. Her heart’s desire is realized! (Korea National District)

### Reflection

How much do you rely on prayer to live each day? Will you today, begin a lifestyle of prayer and meaningful time with the Lord each day. Just tell him you need his help. Trust in Him and He will hear your prayer. “But as for me, I watch in hope for the Lord, I wait for God my Savior; my God will hear me”(Micah 7:7).

### Prayer Requests

Pray that God will restore the families of our churches to make them whole and alive in Christ. Pray that our churches will be places of prayer and open arms to those caught in the bondage of addictions and sin.

## Transformation under persecution

U Kyaw Hla Aung has two daughters and 3 sons. They live in a village along the Pazunchang River. His job is cutting and selling bamboo on which His family is dependent. Previously, when he made extra money, he spent it on alcohol. Men are proud of saying, 'I am a bamboo-cutter. I will cut it, I will sell it and drink alcohol: that's my life'.

Buddhism and animism are common religious practices across the country. When the Nazarene church started mission work in this village, they began with a salvation camp. A few of the villagers, including U Kyaw Hla, came to listen to the Gospel preaching. It is here that U Kyaw Hla Aung accepted Jesus Christ as his personal savior and Lord. He was happily baptized along with a few others. However, Satan used his wife, friends and relatives to persecute him. His wife believed in spirit worship and exorcism, performed fortune-telling and healed the sick. She openly expressed her disrespect for him and persecuted him from the day he was converted.

U Aung went to the local Nazarene missionary teachers for counsel and help from the Bible when encountering conflict with others regarding his new faith in Jesus. He constantly read the Bible and prayed for the conversion of his wife and children even in the midst of many difficulties. He often asked God to reveal Himself in the hearts of people. With his family against him, he could not pray loudly and cry out to God in his home or small village. He went to the forest in order to openly worship God and pray. He was accused of not following the rules against religious conversion unless the person had the approval of town officers and monks.

In spite of all these sufferings, U Kyaw Hla Aung said, "I have been a Buddhist for 50 years, I never felt the joy and peace that I have after believing in Jesus. Jesus is the true God. Everyone needs to know."

Whenever people came to him for conversation, he always shared his new

faith in Jesus. He witnessed to his family, friends and neighbors about Jesus Christ, and invited people to come to another salvation camp in his village. After three days of Bible Study at the camp, his wife, his children and many villagers come to believe in Jesus Christ. They were hungry for God's word. Today, most of the villagers have become Christian and attend the Nazarene house church service. (SouthEast Asia Field)

#### Reflection

Jesus says, "Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." U Aung found his blessing, even while on earth, when God spoke through his life to win his family and village. Heaven is yet to come!

#### Prayer Requests

Let us pray for our fellow believers who undergo persecution that they might be not only comforted, but stand strong as a light in dark place, and find the grace of God abundantly sufficient.

## When God Called

Mahendra grew up in a Catholic family, but there was little understanding or living out one's faith in his experience. It was about form and ritual because his family went to church only to be seen by others. It was a place to talk to friends or even just a new place to sleep. He never thought about God's plans or what He might think, but he discovered God was thinking about him.

It all began with his mother, who was very hungry for God's Word. Every morning at dawn she would seek out a minister for sharing time. After a while Mahendra's mother invited all the children to go to a protestant church with her.

They were invited to attend youth camp, which was something brand new to him. In one service he found himself crying because he was now aware that he was a sinner. When the altar call came he found himself going to the front to pray. It was at that point he felt the touch of God's love in his life. He thought he was pretty good, but at that moment he understood that Jesus died because of his sins. The cross touched and changed his life. While they sang the song, "I Come to the Old Rugged Cross", his heart melted and he grieved over his sin.

This brought about a radical change in his life. He had never imagined nor had a desire to become a minister, but now God's call on him was very strong. Meeting with Jesus changed everything. His friends at school saw the changes in him and even started calling him preacher; and that is exactly what happened. He attended Bible school, then a school of theology, and became a preacher.

Mahendra felt called to plant a church in Kalimantan. Because of God's grace and power, he has been able to serve there until now. God has brought ongoing growth to the church and amazing provision in the lives of the people. He serves a church of simple people who are hungry for God's Word.

He says, “When my time there is ended, it will all be for the glory and praise of God.” (Sealand Field)

#### Reflection

“I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hell will not overcome it”(Matthew16:18). Peter and Mahendra were called of God to build His church. In their case they were called to preach and make disciples. They followed His calling. What about you? What part has God called you to play in building His church? If not preaching, what about healing, teaching, or helping others? The preacher cannot do it alone; he needs the whole body of Christ to build His church.

#### Prayer Requests

Pray for the body of Christ, the whole church in Asia, to be united together in following His calling, to serve the Lord in the calling He has given each one. Pray that they will hear and, in faith, obey.



From his experience, Takashi Nakanishi has come to believe Christians are sanctified through trials for the precious service of the Lord. Since the beginning, God always met their needs and protected their church—the church with no pastor. With the help of God, they were able to take on the yoke of working together with Jesus. Encouraged by the passage in which Jesus said, “For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I with them.” (Matthew 18:20), they served God. Every church member obeyed God and used the gifts that God gave them to strengthen the church. Even during the time of prayer meeting, in which Takashi participated, they truly felt God’s presence and the Holy Spirit working. They forgave each other, serve deach other, and appreciated what they were able to add to each other’s lives as friends and brothers and sisters in Christ.

During the 6 years of not having a pastor, many of the pastors and people from other churches were supporting them, such as donating a surprising amount of money and with prayers. And they truly appreciated the pastors who came through heavy snow to worship on the holy day even from Asahikawa and Sapporo in the snowstorm. Also, some pastors sent a CD of worship with their preaching, so the church was able to keep worshipping while listening to those messages.

They thank God for looking over their church, and for sending a new pastor last year so they could continue to worship in the Lord’s great name. The church of Kamishibetsu is a church in a small town, but they wish to tell the gospel while aligning their hearts to the will of the Lord. They are thankful for all the people who have helped them along the way. (Japan National District)

## Reflection

What do you believe about the church? Does a church require a building, with a pastor, a choir, a song and a message? Or is the church a group of people meeting in the name of Jesus? The Lord met with this church long before a pastor came, and continued to sanctify them for service in his kingdom. The Lord has said, "I will build my church" (Matthew 16:18). He calls all of us to serve as a royal priesthood (1 Peter 2:9). We are the church, his priests, ready to serve each other, grow together and to declare His praises so the world may know Him. Let us not lay it all on the pastor, but share in the work of serving the Lord.

## Prayer Requests

Let us pray for the churches in the Asia-Pacific region who have no pastor, that they will be strengthened in the Lord to be the church as he's called us to be. Pray that we, the church, will shine as a light in the darkness as we hear His calling to be the people of God.

## Broken to Beauty

Meeting Jesus changed the life of an uneducated young man with a family history of alcoholism and domestic violence. Kelvin was 15 when he began to work for a man who shared his Christian faith with him, and by 17 Kelvin had accepted Christ's saving love and grace. Immediately, he began to serve God through worship at his home church. A few years later Kelvin married and moved away. Low self-confidence and past hurts made it difficult for him to connect with a new church family and he began to drift away. Unfortunately, Kelvin suffered the loss of a beloved brother. This tragedy prompted him to return to the source of all true love, God.

When Kelvin returned home, his church welcomed him warmly and guided him back into a deeper relationship and service with God. He found new ways to serve God through leading Bible studies and helping others. Kelvin's thirst for God led him to study theology at NTC Brisbane. This was a challenging faith-based decision since school had never been easy for Kelvin and he had not finished high school. With God's help and the encouragement of other believers, Kelvin began college.

While continuing to study at NTC, Kelvin became the lead Pastor of his home church. His childhood experiences with alcoholism had taught him compassion, and God used this to reach his community. When passion became exhaustion, Kelvin found himself resting from leadership. He attended another Nazarene church, which supported him through depression and anxiety that was partly caused by his earlier life experiences. With spiritual support and medical care, Kelvin regained his emotional strength and is now the lead Pastor at BCON Ministry Centre. Through the love of the church, God has taken the broken pieces of Kelvin's life and created a beautiful vessel that helps others find the same transformation. (Australia & New Zealand Field)

### Reflection

When following Jesus, the way becomes steep, and a brother or sister may find themselves challenged to stay the course. The scripture admonishes us to help those who are broken. “My, brothers, if one of you should wander from the truth and someone should bring him back, remember this: Whoever turns a sinner from the error of his way will save him from death and over a multitude of sins”(James 5:19–20). Who can you bring back this week?

### Prayer Requests

The enemy of our souls wants to deceive and destroy us. Let us faithfully pray for those in ministry in the Australian church. Lift them up to the Lord to keep and encourage them when the trials of ministry overwhelm them.

## A Hypocrite Served

I don't like you, a young theology student thought to herself as she saw her peer stand from her seat and walk towards her. I don't like you. I don't like you. She hoped that if she repeated her wish in her mind, God would either awaken mind-control powers or simply compel this annoyingly talented, self-righteous student to turn around. This irritating student was a biology major hoping to be a Physician's Assistant. She was smart, beautiful, popular, a student leader, and the niece of one of the deans of school. While the theology major was taking 19 credit hours a semester and worked dozens of hours to pay for her school, the biology student had a free ride taking the minimum classes with all-expense-paid mission trips to Europe every summer.

The theology student glared at the biology student with teeth clenched. She stood still holding her plate in the midst of students walking back and forth. I don't like you. I don't like you. I don't like you. The theology student did not awaken her persuasive mind powers that day for the unwanted visitor came closer and closer until the two students were standing face-to-face.

The next moment went into slow motion. The biology student reached out and took a piece of bread from the theology student's plate. The biology student looked at the theology student silently egging for a response. "This the Body of Christ," the theology student finally said, "broken for you, Amber." Amber smiled and raised the small piece of bread.

"Thanks be to God." She responded. She moved to the next theology student and dipped her bread into a goblet full of grape juice, went through with the rest of the sacrament, and returned to her pew. Another student immediately took Amber's spot ripping a piece of bread from the plate. "This is the Body of Christ broken for you, Jake." "Thanks be to God." (Philippines & Micronesia Field)

## Reflection

Jesus is our peace. He has broken down the wall of hostility between God and us (Eph 2:14–22). We are recipients of the benefits of his sacrificial death; it is through his blood that we are cleansed and through his blood that we are healed (Isa 53:5). Yet we, who have experienced these truths ourselves, can easily forget their meaning and implications. Our racial differences, our cultural biases, our economic differences, our age gaps, our education attainments—all of these can become blindfolds that hinder us from seeing the brother and/or sister who is forgiven like us. Ironically, like the story above, we can embody selfishness even when we are in the middle of serving God and his church.

## Prayer Requests

Let us pray for unity in the body of Christ. This is particularly important in Asia, where the diversity of ethnicity and language is a stark reality. In gratitude to Jesus Christ and for the sake of the kingdom, we need to be able to abandon our reservations and prejudices against each other. Let us pray that our oneness in Jesus Christ is exemplified in how we fellowship with one another and support each other.

## A Big Family

Mrs. Kwon, Yu Jung, a member of the Church of the Nazarene for 40 years, called the local Church of the Nazarene her “home.” It became an even bigger family when she attended General Assembly in Indianapolis, USA 2005. She never forgot the atmosphere of oneness of the Nazarene family who gathered together and showed their love including all races, cultures, languages, and values.

She had attended the Nazarene church since she was 8 years old, but suffered shame as the object of children’s teasing while growing up due to her albino white skin. In addition, she suffered discomfort with leukoplakia mouth sores. During her adolescence, she complained many times to God, “If you exist, why did you do these things to me?” In the church, she thought these Christians would show God’s love to others who were lonely like her. But they seemed to only share love among themselves, not with lonely individuals outside their circle. Still struggling with this matter, she entered Korea Nazarene University. She began to understand more about God through theology. After graduating from KNU in 1997, Yu Jung followed the purpose and direction God provided. As a result, the resentment disappeared, and she received treatment for her skin with a graft at a good medical clinic. She felt God’s hand was on her and life took on new meaning. God led her beautifully into marriage as a pastor’s wife; not what she planned, but where God’s providence led her.

Yu Jung now thanks the Lord that she breathes, walks, and can move her fingers freely. Though she has a skin disease, she walks in the crowd in a dignified manner, with a smile on her face, because now she walks with Jesus. Her dream is coming true. In the General Assembly service, she raised her hands to praise Him, with the smile of Jesus Christ shining through her. (Korea National District)

## Reflection

When we walk through difficult days, doubts and fears can overwhelm us. But our hope is in the One who holds us in his hand. Are you letting fear and doubt steal your joy? Starting now, trust in the One who keeps you. “Cast all your anxiety on him, because he cares for you”(1Peter 5:7). Will you put your all into his loving hands?

## Prayer Requests

Let us pray for the Church of the Nazarene in the Asia-Pacific region that our “Love for each other may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that we may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless until the day of Jesus Christ”(Philippians 1:9–10).



## A Big Loss Leads to a Bigger Gain

Ma Tharphui was a very famous, powerful witch doctor in the Pazunchang river village. But as a young girl, when a spirit called to her in her dreams to work as a witchdoctor, she refused, until one day, a spirit told her that her son would die because she would not accept the spirit's command to live in her and work for it.

Her son died; which began her career as a witch doctor. She worked almost 30 years charging people for to tell their fortune, heal their sicknesses, give their babies a name, growing very rich. The villagers along this area of western Myanmar fully rely on the power of the witch doctors to tell them what a spirit wants from them and are frightened to make any decision in their lives without consulting the witch doctor.

She was very opposed to the Nazarene mission work starting in her village in 1917. She entered their compound to curse the family with an exorcism, to remove them from her village. But she sensed the spirits in her, who were helping her in the past, could not harm the Christians. There was a more powerful spirit (god) with them. She wanted to have that spirit.

Her inner desire to know more about the Christian God took her to a salvation camp. She brought her husband, and all her 10 children to the salvation camp. They all accepted Jesus Christ and were baptized. But she struggled for many sleepless nights to make a choice between money, respect, and authority among her people and the gospel of the truth. She said, "I knew deep down in my heart Jesus is the true God, but worried for our future."

When her husband and children matured with the first Christian group and took a leadership role in the Church of the Nazarene, she accepted Jesus Christ and committed to be baptized. She lost her job, income, and respect, but was willing to carry her cross and said, she never had such peace and joy

in her former life as a witch doctor.

Often the spirits will come in her dreams seeking to gain entrance in her, to make her a powerful witch doctor again. Whenever those dreams come, she instantly prays in the name of Jesus, and is delivered.

Today, she is an active woman leader in the Nazarene church in her village, a member of the school board and assisting our missionary teacher. (SouthEast Asia Field)

### Reflection

Jesus gives peace that the world cannot give. Ma Tharphui found Jesus and the peace that he gives, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give to you,"(John 14:27). Are you living in the peace that only Jesus can give? Take time to remember who He is that lives in you, and receive His peace.

### Prayer Requests

Pray for Ma Tharphui and others who have become believers, that when they are tempted, that Jesus will deliver them.

## A Strange Encounter

Growing up, Oliver saw a lot of bad things happen in the church. He didn't have much to do with the church in his late teenage years and into his twenties. Then, one day, someone dropped a \$50 bill at his work. He felt compelled to find this man and tell him it was in the safe. He thought the man who left the money had told him that he went to a certain church, so the very next Sunday, the Oliver got his kids dressed, loaded them in the car, and showed up at the church. It was small, but he felt like this was exactly the place he was supposed to be. It turns out that it wasn't even the church the man attended. Now, almost two years later, he is preparing to get baptized.

Psalms 51 has been Oliver's prayer in preparation for his baptism. "Have mercy on me O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions. Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin ... wash me and I will be whiter than snow. ... Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit in me" (vv. 1-2, 7b, 10, NIV). These are some powerful words that are making him so focused and excited for his baptism.

He feels like God is just working in him and through him and has been kicking him into gear after a membership meeting (at his church). He is so full of wonder and awe over God's creation and the gifts that He continuously provides fellow Christians and just people in general. The young man has never felt happier, lighter, and freer. Although he knows people have seasons, this is one season that he doesn't want to end. (Australia & New Zealand Field)

## Reflection

Sometimes it seems a strange encounter brings us to the Lord. He longs to find us and goes to great lengths to seek us out. Then He continues the journey by walking with us and creating newness in us day by day. We join our friend in asking the Lord to “create in me a pure heart, and renew a steadfast spirit in me.” (Psalm 51:10). What needs washing away in your heart today, to make you whiter than snow?

## Prayer Requests

Pray that God will renew a steadfast spirit in you, and in your church and the churches of our region. Pray a prayer of thanksgiving for His gifts that He provides through His people and His creation.

## Darkness Becomes Light

Before Mr. Ipin came to the Church of the Nazarene he was from a Catholic background. His reality was a life of darkness. There he met the pastor of the Ratoombo Church of the Nazarene, who eventually became his wife. Before he married he decided to follow Jesus and accept Jesus Christ as his personal Savior. The decision to become a follower of Christ brought many changes into his life.

In a particular Easter service, he began to really consider and think about what Jesus did for him, how Jesus loved people so much that he was willing to die on a cross to save them from their sins. The weight and guilt of all the sins he had done weighed heavily on him. At that point he began to follow Jesus more sincerely and major changes began to happen in his life.

During another Easter season at a prayer and fasting service God once again touched his heart. The pastor and spouse together washed the feet of all those of the congregation. God changed him to be a person of true humility because he himself had experienced God's amazing love. Mr. Ipin personally felt the power of Jesus' sacrifice for him.

Day by day he surrendered himself to serve the Lord. He became active in ministry at his church as worship leader and also became very active in building the actual building. Mr. Ipin began to give financially as God had blessed him. Before every service he began to clean the church just because of God's love working through him.

The pastor has witnessed his sacrificial attitude through the giving of his financial means, in physical effort, and in thought to support the church's development. His life has been a great example to the rest of the congregation to also give of their means and abilities, and to truly develop their relationship with Jesus through their own involvements in ministry. The Great Shepherd is to be praised for His powerful work in His church in

Ratoombu. (Sealand Field)

### Reflection

The night before Jesus was crucified he humbled himself before his disciples and washed their feet. Paul says, “Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped. But made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness”(Philippians 2: 5–7). In what ways has God’s love worked through you to serve others?

### Prayer Requests

Pray that the followers of Jesus in the Nazarene churches in Asia will take on the same attitude as that of Christ Jesus. In taking on the role of a servant, as he did, we will fulfill the mission of Jesus to build his church.

## A Promise of Hope

Yasuko Yamazoe grew up in a family of unbelievers, but when she was little had a chance to learn about Jesus because of a Sunday School that a Christian couple had provided in their home. She went to that Sunday School during her elementary years; however, when she entered junior high school, she stopped attending. Her grandmother, who was a support for her and understood her, became afflicted with dementia. Her father's business soon failed: and finding no regular work nearby, went to work far away. Once in a while her father drank and fought with her mother. The problems of their family shadowed her heavy heart. It was shortly after becoming a sophomore in highschool, a friend from elementary days invited her to go to church with him. She immediately answered, "I'm going," and began to attend the Ogura Nazarene church with her friend. She felt restless with her family issues and began thinking about and longing for peace of mind. As a matter of fact, she was longing to find salvation and began looking for it in the Bible. It was in the autumn of the second year of high school, that she realized Jesus died on the cross for her. The Holy Spirit spoke into her heart and by faith she trusted Jesus for salvation.

However, at that time, her thoughts about her parents were still complicated by immature faith. Her father knew about her baptism and he felt very angry. Although Yasuko wanted to leave her father, God did not let her go. She could see that her mother's health was failing, with dementia when she was 72 years old. Both her father and mother stayed with her family at her house. Her husband was also a believer; so for Easter and Christmas the four of them took the opportunity to go to church. When her mother was 77 years old and her father was 87 years old, she was given the blessing to see them both baptized. Due to Jesus' death on the cross, a reconciliation with God was given for them all. Thanks to that, Yasuko was given reconciliation with her parents; and she was given true peace in her

heart. Her parents have now been called to heaven, but thanks to God's promised hope, she is assured they will meet again in the kingdom of heaven someday. (Japan National District)

### Reflection

The Bible tells us, "We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure. It enters the inner sanctuary behind the curtain where Jesus, who went before us, has entered on our behalf"(Hebrews 6:19). The hope Jesus holds out to us is freely given so let us wait patiently for what He has promised. What promise are you holding onto today? God is offering us hope to anchor us in the storms and confusion of life. He won't let you go. Hold onto His promises.

### Prayer Requests

Pray for those whose hope is sinking in the doubts and chaos that the enemy seeks to destroy them with. Even those who follow Jesus, are tempted to lose sight of Jesus and their hope in Him. Pray for one another that our hope will remain firm and secure in the One who is interceding for us before the Father.



## The Right Path Found

Sara used to be a Muslim, who now has converted to Christianity. It was not easy for her in the beginning. She wanted to know more about Jesus and Christianity, so she started interacting and socializing with many Christian people, who eventually led her to church.

It was then that she found out that the only religion which could bring her closer to her inner self, allow her to recognize who she is, and could clean her soul, was Christianity. This was because Jesus sacrificed His life to forgive everyone's sins. That proved and continues to prove to Sara how much He loves not only her, but everyone.

She is happy she can choose a way which she believes from the bottom of her heart. She now believes that God sent His very own Son to lead her on the right path to salvation, and that Jesus saves her from her sins. She says that God sent Jesus to bring light into her heart.

Her prayer is, "Father, I ask you to give me a heart full of hope and be my Savior. Help me to be a good follower for You. Amen." (Australia & New Zealand Field)

## Reflection

God is calling many to himself. He is the God who “goes before” to bring people to know Him. Hearts are hungry to find the right path, to find the One who loves them. God is working in His world in places we might not be aware of. Will you look out for someone God might be working on, that in most ways, we cannot see it? Remember, “We love because he first loved us”(1John 4:19).

## Prayer Requests

Pray that the Lord will continue to move throughout the Muslim people to draw them to Himself. Pray that all who name the name of Jesus will have their eyes opened to see those around them who are seeking to find their way. Pray they will reach out in love and friendship. Pray that God will continue to “go before” the Muslim people and that they will find hope and know the Savior.

## Our Christmas Tradition

Bing! “Four in the afternoon, sir. Today.”

It was already noon, and the young man was asked to preach and baptize on the eve of Christmas at a resort three hours from his location. His parents were in the hospital, he was taking care of his younger brother, and he and his wife were already planning to create their own traditions for their first Christmas together.

Bing! “Sorry, sir, for late notice.”

Bing! “There’s no one else, sir. We already asked four other people.”

He shared eye contact with his wife, and they both knew what they must do. His shoulders and head sank as he texted the pastora back, “We’ll be there.” After many hours of driving in heavy traffic and heavy rain, the couple and the younger brother finally arrived at the small resort. The young man gave a short sermon and the baptism began.

As each teenager stepped into the pool to participate in the sacrament of living a life of faith, the pastora gave a brief testimony of each teen. At each testimony, the couple developed tears in their eyes. The baptism was soon over, and it was time for the long drive back home.

“My love,” the wife said, “May this become our Christmas tradition?”  
(Philippines & Micronesia Field)

## Reflection

Sometimes, just when we are so busy with things—good and godly things—for ourselves, God interrupts us and calls us somewhere. This is God’s sense of humor. For most people, these uninvited interruptions are not met with grace. After all, a little rest time or family time is as godly as visiting the sick. We read in Matthew 9 that once, Jesus and his disciples were so tired that they thought of having a short break. Unfortunately, the people did not catch the message and shamelessly imposed themselves to him. When Jesus saw them, he was not mad or disappointed. Instead, “he had compassion on them” (Matt 9:36). Jesus’ selfless love for others enabled him to let go of what is good for him in exchange for what is best for others.

## Prayer Requests

Let us pray that we may have the same heart of Jesus Christ. He had compassion for the poor, the sick, the needy, the lost, the outcast—even though they were imposing too strongly upon him. Our region is full of people who are in need of Jesus Christ—urgently—and we need the fruit of the Spirit in our lives. Let us pray for those whose ministry are specifically among the poor and needy. Let us pray that many others will be ready to be interrupted by God’s calling and be obedient in response.

## The Prayers Answered

Mrs. Kim, Sung Hye began to attend a church of the Nazarene located in Sung Nam City, Korea from an early age and became very active in the church. Her boyfriend, before they got married, was not a Christian but promised to become one so she would marry him. After the wedding, he rarely attended worship services except on Easter, Thanksgiving Sunday, and Christmas.

When she moved to Go Yang city, a suburb of Seoul, Korea, she became a member and faithful deaconess of Tree Planted by the Water Church of the Nazarene located in Go Yang city. She was always bright and cheerful and everybody in the church was drawn to her. Her voice was clear ringing, hearty and pleasant, and even silvery. She always encouraged others with her positive thinking. She studied counseling and opened a counseling center for children and teenagers. One of her prayer requests was for her husband with her two teenage sons to attend church regularly with her. Unexpectedly she was diagnosed biliary tract cancer 3 years ago when she was only 44. The doctor declared that she could expect to live no more than 6 months. The church members were shocked and had prayed fervently for her healing. Even during painful chemo treatments, she went out to evangelize every weekend, before children's summer camp began, by inviting children on the street and playground.

She prayed not only for her healing but also for God's grace for her family, to bring them closer to God. Her life was extended by more than 2 years and the family members were led to the church while asking God to heal her. Nevertheless, God had another plan and she passed away in October, 2017 after 40 days in the hospital.

After the spiritual leader in the family had gone to be with the Lord, church members prayed for the bereaved husband and two sons to remain in the church. God answered prayer. They have attended worship services on

every Sunday and gotten closer to the Savior motivated by her presence in Heaven and their family life left on earth. Even though she is not here, her most desired prayer request was answered! (Korea National District)

### Reflection

Who are you praying for that they might come to the Savior? Someone today needs you to love them, reach out to them, and pray for them. "The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective"(James 5:16).

### Prayer Requests

Pray that those who are seeking the Lord in your town, will be found by him. Pray that the church will be open and loving to those who have not yet been found. Pray for the loved ones of your church family to come to the Lord. Pray for those who are suffering in illness.

## A Revival Leader Under Persecution

Joseph was deeply troubled because of the immoral life style of his people of the Bawkalihli village. In a vision, God told him to sanctify himself, pray and fast for 4 days. He went to the forest and fasted there. On the third day he became exhausted and nearly unconscious. Then, he heard the voice of the Holy Spirit, saying, “I can fast for 40 days and nights for you, but you can only fast 3 days for me. Accept your limitation and entirely depend on me. Go preach to your people. I will make wonders and signs to bring people to me. Take my yoke, and learn from me.”

The next Sunday morning at 6am, the Holy Spirit told him to preach on the street. He started preaching until many cried out and followed him. Later a man invited him to preach in front of his house, at the crossroads of the village. People sat in a circle around him listening to his preaching on repentance, and cried out under conviction. Revival broke out and they could not stop singing with signs and wonders following. Some started to speak strange languages and some children received a gift of interpretation, others saw a vision while others recited many verses without having ever read a Bible in their whole life. Joseph was invited from house to house where miracles happened in each house: the sick healed, demons cast out and visions seen.

However, the mainline churches persecuted Joseph, accusing him of being demonic. Joseph was reported to the Karen Army and the Government Army as a dangerous man. Both Armies started controlling the importation of rice and food supplies coming to Joseph’s village. He and his followers were not allowed to ride public transportation or harvest their farms. Praying for those who gave them trouble, they walked over 30 miles to buy food supplies and other needs.

Due to the danger, Joseph and his followers moved from Bawkalihli to

the Taungoo area. The Church of the Nazarene allowed Joseph and his followers to use their building for their daily worship service. During a fasting prayer meeting, a young child got a vision and prophesized that God had prepared a church for them born of a Pentecostal revival. When they learned Nazarene history from the Manual at the very first meeting with Nazarene leaders in 1998, Joseph and his followers joined The Church of the Nazarene. Joseph became the first Karen Nazarene pastor. Many kids who had the gift of vision and prophecy are now pastoring local churches. Today, Karen churches are healthy and strong in Myanmar. (SouthEast Asia Field)

#### Reflection

God says, "Call to me and I will answer you and ell you great and unsearchable things you do not know"(Jeremiah 33:3). Will you call on him and trust him for the needs of your village?

#### Prayer Requests

Pray for more believers to be filled with the Spirit and go to those places God is seeking to know Him.



## From Bitterness to Life

Kezia grew up in a broken home. When she was five her mother left the children to live with a different man. It was very painful for her younger sister, her father, and herself. She became a rebellious child. When she was eight her father died, and three years later her mother also died. Kezia was angry with her mother, angry with her situation, and angry with God. As she grew to be an adult the anger grew within her. She felt God was not fair and did not care for her.

The deep disappointment with her mother grew into a deep root of hate which then became a deep bitterness. Promiscuity, fighting, and never going to church was how she lived. She was sure she did not belong in church because that was a place for holy people. Her life was empty and without purpose. Life was only about breathing. Once she even attempted suicide.

Her distant cousin invited her to go to the Church of the Nazarene. Kezia was not interested but her insistence won. The youth team and pastor showed her kindness; and little by little she began to open up. The pastor's family opened their hearts and home to her. There she was loved unconditionally. They accepted her as their own child. Through all they did for her Kezia came to understand what it means to be loved sincerely, though they were not even her birth parents.

Later, while attending a recovery retreat, God touched her heart. God showed Kezia her life like a slide show. She saw a life full of anger, hate, and rejection of Jesus; she wept. Then God showed her Jesus dying on the cross to carry her sin in the movie *Passion of Christ*. That day God asked her to forgive her mother so that she could have peace from all that happened in her past. She could only cry; she truly felt God's touch. It was not easy for her, but she made the decision to be willing to forgive her mother. She surrendered her life to the Lord Jesus, who redeemed her with His precious blood on Calvary. That day, April 25, 2006, was a landmark day for Kezia.

She was healed, freed from bitterness, and gradually was able to forgive and honor her mother.

Through prayer and reading the Word each day God kept working in her life, bringing her into intimacy with Him. The pastor trained Kezia and taught her many things, one of which was to be a leader in her local church. Thirteen years she has served through good and bad times, from not knowing anything to the point that she can now train others. God has given back to her many things that she lost in life; one of the best is a new family.

Kezia became convinced of God's call on her life to be a missionary. Because of that she left her comfort zone and came to INTC to prepare to serve. She says, "I will go wherever He wants to send me. My life is no longer about me but about God and what He wants in my life. (Sealand Field)

### Reflection

David sings: "God sets the lonely in families, he leads forth the prisoners with singing;"(Psalm 68: 6). God loves the lonely and lost ones and longs to give them a home. Is there someone in your life you need to forgive? Would you let Jesus help you forgive that one so you can come home and be set free?

### Prayer Requests

Pray that God will convict his people across Asia of the lack of forgiveness that has hindered them from finding fullness in Him, stunting the growth of His church.

## No Other God

Paddy was born into an Indian family who was devout in their worship of many gods and had hundreds of idols in their “worship room.” When she moved to New Zealand in 2010, she continued to worship idols. She even brought some family idols with her to create a small prayer room in her new home, and she would chant for hours. From childhood, her family knew about Jesus. But He was just one more in their millions of gods.

One day, her husband had a brain stroke. The hospital arranged for a chaplain to visit who was from her area in India and spoke the same language. When he discovered that she and her husband spoke Telugu, he prayed in their language and brought a Bible. When she got that Bible, she didn’t know what to do with it; she was literally just touching the Bible on her husband from head to toe and repeating the words “Jesus, heal him.”

On the fifteenth day, when Paddy went home, she had a dream in which she saw Jesus with blood on his face and all the marks from being whipped, and he said to her, “Don’t worry. I am here.” When she woke up, she was shocked to realize that Jesus was talking to her, and she has been holding on to him ever since.

Her husband was in rehab for 6 months, and her journey with Jesus continued to grow. By that time, Paddy had removed all the idols from the house. She said, “Who can do this other than God?” Finally, she said, “Yes, God, I am going to accept you as my Savior” and she was baptized on Easter. Sadly, on that same night, Paddy’s husband left her, returning to India. Nevertheless, she said, “I didn’t get baptized because of a human. I didn’t get baptized because of my husband. I got baptized because of Jesus.”

This is her fifth year that she has been born again. Every day is an encounter with Jesus. She is growing and learning new things each day. When she looks back and sees what happened to her, she realized that if she

didn't have Christ, she would have been shattered. In every situation she feels like He makes her a winner. She always feels like she is a very special child of God. He rewards her in every way with unexplainable peace and joy. She knows that such great gifts are only from Jesus. (Australia & New Zealand Field)

#### Reflection

God works in mysterious ways to reach his lost sheep. He not only seeks and finds them, he keeps them through many trials and hardships of life. There is nothing like the love of Jesus when the love of mankind falters and desert us. Many fellow Christians are going through persecutions and pressures of life. Jesus sees them and loves them. "You are the God who sees me," were Hagar's words to the angel who visited her in her outcast condition(Genesis 16:13). Can you find someone who needs you to be Jesus to them this week?

#### Prayer Requests

Pray for those who have been deserted by others and need God. Pray that someone will come to them to share His love and power. They need our prayers as they face opposition from family and friends. They need His presence.

## The Good Fight

Do you ever wonder what God's plans are for people? Youth leaders have asked this question in the light of Aila's life. She was a high school student when she started coming to church, having been invited by her classmate. She clicked immediately with the youth group, and developed close relationships with everyone including the leaders. Everyone loved her. Her smile and sparkling eyes made her very likeable and approachable, helping her serve as a great usher.

What stood out was that she always made herself available. She became involved in almost every ministry in the local church. She had a deep hunger for the Word and a passionate mission to share the gospel to others. She matured spiritually quite rapidly, overtaking many of the old timers in knowledge and ministry efforts. Being multi-talented and with leadership capabilities, she was entrusted with various things. She did everything willingly and sacrificially.

But, sadly, she was abruptly diagnosed of lupus. After a month of battling with it, she died at the young age of 18.

Scores of people attended the evening services. Her former and current classmates would faithfully come. It is through their eulogies that we discovered a side of Aila that we never heard about at church. Her classmates testified that she was a go-to person for advice. Some testified that they did not need to approach her, because, discerning their need for encouragement, she would approach them. Some shared that she formed small groups among the students for Bible study. Overall, they were very thankful for her. She made a huge difference in the lives of people around her. She brought God's presence and made everywhere God's sanctuary.

People have asked why God took her life so soon. She accomplished so much in a very short time and could have accomplished more. No one

expected her death. There was not only grief at church, but also a massive sense of loss. The church could feel her absence. The Bible verse on the tarpaulin that the church prepared for her read, “Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called when you made your good confession in the presence of many witnesses,” (1 Timothy 6:12). (Philippines & Micronesia Field)

### Reflection

For some, the race is very short; the finish line is just around the corner. Aila’s legacy teaches us that what really matters is not the length, but the impact of our own journey to others. She fought a good fight. She made a good confession in the presence of many witnesses. She has taken hold of eternal life. Will you allow God’s presence to touch others through your life today?

### Prayer Requests

Today, let us pray for the youth in Philippines and Micronesia. They have a lot of potential to become an unstoppable movement. They can make a huge difference among their peers, and many are already accomplishing this. May the Lord rise up more youth like Aila, who stood in the gap, and did her very best in being salt and light.

## Grace in the hardships

Kumamoto city was swept away by a massive earthquake in April of 2016. There are many people whose lives were changed dramatically. Their homes were lost, and all their possessions were damaged or lost. One pastor experienced several months of fears that came from the traumatic experiences he went through.

Because of the damage from the earthquake, his church was forced to hold worship services in a small room on the first floor of the church building for three months. Part of the ceiling of the sanctuary on the second floor had collapsed. In the midst of this distressing situation, however, his church received encouragement and precious donations, not only from the Japanese Church of the Nazarene, but also from other churches, and from around the world. After the restoration work was completed, a thanksgiving service was held, to celebrate what God had done. Now the pastor thanks God for His kindness in trouble and praises His name. He prays that “May those who are still in trouble be blessed with the abundant grace and mercy of God above.” (Japan National District)

## Reflection

When adversity comes our way, whether disaster in nature, or abuse from others, a human reaction often is, “Why is this happening to me?” No answer seems to come from this question. But God still reigns, and he is the God who sees us. He calls us to keep our eyes on Him and wait for him. He will come—in His time. Lamentations 3:22–23 encourages us with these words, “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.” Then again in verse 32, we are reminded, “Though he brings grief, he will show compassion, so great is his unfailing love.” By faith we know God is good.

## Prayer Requests

Pray for the pastors and churches in Japan, who may be suffering from the after effects of the earthquakes and other natural disasters, in recent months or years. Pray for those near and far to hear God’s call to reach out to support and show kindness to the people of Japan. Pray that the light of Jesus will shine brighter through those who have suffered and those who come to help them. Pray that the Lord will be lifted up and all will be touched by the mercies of the Lord.



## Delivered from Fear

Merry's family clan is very large with every household assigned a certain number of death anniversaries to organize every year. This custom of recognizing the ancestors requires a lot of money to create a big festive time with many family members gathering and enjoying each other's company. The youth do not know the ancestors they celebrate, but it is expected they will do this to make their ancestors happy. As she grew up, Merry was happy to support her family in this duty. Also, at other times during the year, like New Year's Eve, offerings are given, not only for ancestors, but for some gods they didn't know. Orphan spirits were worshiped by feeding them to make them happy. If they feed them well, they will bless the people's jobs, or give protection. Day by day, this kind of worship became a habit to Merry. She had a feeling like someone accepted her offering with pleasure and happiness, and it seemed to form an invisible connection that was important.

As she got older and wiser, she saw her family spending so much money on those offerings. She began to ask her mom questions, but she did not get convincing answers. These questions weighed heavily on her mind. "Why do I have to do this? What happens to me if I don't give offerings?" She felt she wasted time and money on those practices. She wanted to stop it right away, but she was so afraid of a force that might hurt her or others if she stopped. Her sister had experienced violent symptoms due to an evil spirit. This experience more than any other bound her in fear to continue the offerings to the spirits.

After beginning to believe in Jesus, she learned she needed to abandon idol worship and worship the one true God. But she was afraid to let go of these practices. Her fear of what would happen to herself and her family controlled her. She learned that God had authority over all forces and would protect all those belonging to him. Her husband had a solid faith in God and

helped her take a step, fully trust in God, and obey Him. Finally, she was set free from the forces that had been controlling her and knew God's protection and peace. She praised him for removing her burdens. (SouthEast Asia Field)

#### Reflection

Jesus said, "Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid" (John 14:27b). The Psalmist in chapter 34:4, "I sought the Lord, and He answered me; He delivered me from all my fears." Have you sought him and let him deliver you from your fears? He gives His people peace. Will you trust him today with that fear that has controlled you?

#### Prayer Requests

Pray that the God of all comfort will reach people in the states of Myanmar with His love and power over all fear. Pray that the chains of fear and doubt will be broken.

## A Spoonful of Kindness

Mupe Kaupa and his family grew up Lutheran church members. Mupe visited the Nazarene Church pastored by Pastor Bernard Kua in his village. He liked the church and began to attend it regularly which caused tension in the family every Sunday. At one-point Mupe's wife, Bette, threatened to expose him to the Lutheran church leaders that he had been secretly attending another church.

They continued going their separate ways on Sundays until one Sunday, which was the dedication day for the pastors Kunai house(grass house); and Bette was invited. Bette decided to go along! After the service, rice was served. Mupe and his wife both got a plate of rice but only Mupe has a spoon, the wife didn't. While Mupe was eating his rice using the only spoon, the missionary who was at the service walked over and sat between them. Then he asked the wife why she isn't eating. The wife told him she is waiting for Mupe to finish eating so she can use the spoon. The missionary took his spoon and gave it to her! After three spoons of rice, she saw the missionary eating his rice with his fingers! Bette couldn't eat anymore her heart was touched by what she had just seen!

That very day Bette saw for the first time a white missionary eating with his fingers. What she saw impressed her beyond her wildest imagination leading her to conclude that this was a real missionary man. The small gesture the missionary made, convinced Bette's heart and she joined her husband's new church, the church of the Nazarene!

Mupe and His wife were very instrumental in sponsoring about 50 students to go to Bible college; and began supporting five pastors! He also built three church buildings solely from his pocket and assisted in providing timber for the new District house and many more good deeds! (Melanesia & South Pacific Field)

## Reflection

Peter exhorts us to “participate in the divine nature by making every effort to add to your faith goodness… and to your godliness, brotherly kindness…” in 2 Peter 1:7. Kindness is listed as one of the 9 fruits of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22. Since we now have the Holy Spirit in us we have His nature within us, and His nature is kind, drawing others to Himself. So, let’s live out His nature and fruit of the Holy Spirit, thus spreading the kingdom of God in a most delightful way. For to receive kindness softens and brings joy to the heart.

## Prayer Requests

Pray that all across the Asia-Pacific region kindness will become our way of life. Pray that God’s holy people will live out our new nature and the fruit of the Spirit that God has given us. Pray that we will wake up to opportunities to share our faith from the very core of our being with a new wave of kindness that springs up from a grateful heart for His kindness to us.

# *FOLLOWING JESUS TO THE CROSS*

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