

Life-Giving Water

In early November, I, Travis, will be a part of consultant checking the book of John as drafted into the Tsamakko language of Southern Ethiopia. And so, I've had the privilege of digging into these beautiful Scriptures and catching a glimpse of their unique shape in the Tsamakko language and culture. In my preparatory study, I was particularly struck by Jesus' conversation with the woman at the well, in which he spoke of *living water*, or as the Tsamakko team translated it '*life-giving water*'. This teaching jumped off the page at me because of the analogy we had used the previous week in meetings with Gumuz church leaders.

On the first day of a week-long workshop called Truly Fruitful (aimed at teaching pastors and church leaders how to confidently use Scripture in their ministries), I was asked to say a few words. And so, wanting to challenge them to persevere in the difficult task of learning to read, I told this story, "Imagine a lazy man who is 'grabbed by thirst' (the Gumuz idiom). He walks down to the hand pump in his community, and he begins to push and pull the handle to draw the water up. However,

the well is deep, and he soon realizes that it would take a lot of pumping before the water would reach the surface. Being lazy, he stops, he lays down, and while waiting for someone else to come and pump, he dies." To make the point of the analogy clear, I continued, "This book," I said, holding up a copy of the participant's well-worn copy of our Luke/Acts translation, "This book is not my words, nor that of the Gumuz translators, no, it is the Word of God, and these words contain *life*, just as the water contained life for the man dying of thirst. Yet accessing this *life*, will require of you hard work and perseverance as you study to learn to read well in your own language."



I then challenged them to look around them, in their churches and communities. Many Gumuz people are laying beside the well, unwilling or unable to pump out the life-giving water for themselves. Who will take the handle? As I have stressed many times and in many prayers for the Gumuz people, all it takes is *one person* to pump, one literate person in a community who will read Scriptures with fluency and confidence, not only for their nourishment, but for that of the whole community.

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Although unanticipated, my story of the man dying of thirst next to the well became a theme for the rest of the week. Pray with us that the literacy training, public



reading practice, Scripture memorization exercises, teaching on Bible study methods and the Good Shepherd posters we gave them would equip and motivate these young church leaders to take up the handle, and persevere in the difficult work of drawing and serving their congregations the *life-giving water* of the Word, the Gospel, namely Jesus. For it is only by their efforts, empowered by the Holy Spirit, that our work will be *truly fruitful*, in reaping a harvest of eternal life among the Gumuz people!



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THE RACE CONTINUES

TAW's Mile Marker 46
October 2018

In All Things **GROWING**

Recently celebrating Grace's sixth birthday reminded us that all of us are in a **GROWth** process. We continue to **GROW** in our role as loving parents as well as in our transitioning roles here in Ethiopia. Lumi is **GROWing** in her understanding of God, his world, and the ABC's introduced in her preschool program. Grace and Micah are **GROWing** a lot through their involvement at Bingham Academy. Their days begin early as they catch the taxi at 7am, not returning until after 4pm. Grace loves everything school: learning, playing with friends, and especially her KG teacher



from the US. Pray for Grace's **GROWth** in stamina as she comes home most days exhausted and both her and Micah have caught some nasty colds in recent weeks.

Micah has been **GROWing** so much in school. He is enjoying having a male teacher, new this year from Australia, and the boys in his class are really solid, well...as solid as one can expect of third graders. 😊 He has been a trooper trying to fill in the education gaps after having bounced around from home school (KG-1st), to American school (2nd), to now the Cambridge system which runs on a more rigorous pace. Pray for him, that he remains encouraged and positive! Please pray for us all, as we submit to the Holy Spirit in all things, specifically in the areas in which he wants us to **GROW**.



Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses... marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus...

Hebrews 12:1-2 NIV

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