

Broadcast 06 – Bible Study & Devotion

SAMMY:

Greetings everyone! This is Sammy. Thank you for joining us for our broadcast today. For a while now, I have been home from the translation workshop. That is where I was part of a team of people who were translating the New Testament from our national language into our mother-tongue language using a process called **MAST** -- that stands for Mobilized Assistance Supporting Translation. Since we have been home from the workshop, the team members have continued our translation work. We want to have the whole Bible in our mother-tongue language. Today, as I was preparing for the broadcast, the pastor of my church stopped by for a visit. So I have invited him to join us and he has agreed. Welcome, Pastor Fin.

PASTOR FIN:

Thank you for inviting me to join you today, Sammy. This has been an exciting time for me and the people of our church. You and the other translators have given us a great gift. It is the first time that we have had any portion of the Scripture in our mother-tongue language. People are realizing that God can speak to them in their own language. They are starting to be more excited about studying the Bible and understanding it better.

SAMMY:

Yes, it was very exciting when we returned from the translation workshop with the book of Mark in our own language. I remember how excited I was to hear you read from Mark and preach your sermon inspired by that reading.

PASTOR FIN:

That was an occasion for celebration. It will be wonderful when we have the entire New Testament in our language.

SAMMY:

I agree, Pastor Fin. That is something that we all would like. But, Pastor, I need to tell you that lately I have been having trouble completing my translation assignments. I have felt discouraged.

PASTOR FIN:

Sammy, that is why I stopped by to visit today. In church last week, it seemed like you were not as enthusiastic as usual. You did not join in the songs and the readings in the same way. So I wanted to check on you and see if there was anything bothering you. We all need encouragement sometimes. I am happy to provide it to people when they need it. Why do you think you are feeling discouraged?

SAMMY:

I think I am just so disappointed in myself. I had such enthusiasm when I left the translation workshop and I wanted to keep working at that same pace. But once I

returned home, there were so many things that I needed to do. I am easily distracted. I find that it is very difficult to focus on my translation work.

PASTOR FIN:

I understand. At the translation workshop, that was all you needed to think about and the only responsibility you had. They provided a place for you to work, the materials you needed, your food and your place to sleep. Everyone at the workshop was focused on the translation and working together to achieve a common goal. Day-to-day life does not give us that same opportunity. There are other responsibilities and distractions. That is something we all experience.

SAMMY:

Thank you, Pastor. It helps to know that I am not the only person that has this struggle. What can I do to overcome this feeling of being discouraged? I do want to stick to this translation task God has called me to, but I just am not hearing His voice and guidance as strongly now that I am home.

PASTOR FIN:

It is important to know that you really want to stick with the task and be faithful to Bible study, Sammy. I am concerned that you feel you are not hearing God's voice and guidance as strongly. Do you want to talk about some of the reasons you might be feeling this way and some things that might help? I believe that one of the keys to keep translators motivated and their work moving forward is for each team member to continue to make Bible study and prayer a priority in their life. That is a time that we set aside daily to talk with God and hear His voice. How have your Bible study and prayer times been going?

SAMMY:

When we first returned from the workshop, I spent time in study and prayer each morning. Then I began to be so busy and overwhelmed. Often, it was nighttime and I neglected to find a way to spend time with the Lord. I missed that quiet time at the start of the day. I prayed about it just this morning and I have resolved to resume reading a portion of the Bible and praying every day.

PASTOR FIN:

It is great that you have made that commitment, Sammy. We all need to have dedication to daily devotions no matter how busy we are. Let us think about ways to help you find time for your daily Bible reading and prayer.

SAMMY:

I think that I need to get up earlier in the morning so that I can start with a time of devotions.

PASTOR FIN:

Yes, that works for many people. It is a way to be sure that you have had your devotional time before the activities of the day start and distract us. There are other people who like to have their devotional time in the evening, before going to bed. They feel that it helps them calm down and take all the praises and challenges of the day to God. I also know a few people who commit their lunch time at work to devotions. One advantage of this is that they can witness their faith to others in the workplace. Some of these people have been joined in their devotions at work by other Christians and even by people who are not believers now but are interested in learning more about Christ and the Bible.

SAMMY:

So, there is no specific time that should have personal devotions?

PASTOR FIN:

Correct. And there is no rule that you can only have devotions once a day! Sammy, there will continue to be days when you are busy or feel distracted. On those days, even if you are able to read just a verse or two in your Bible, you will be able to carry those words with you for the rest of the day. Even if your prayer is a short one, that is okay. You can continue praying as you travel to your job. As you do your work, you can keep up a conversation with God, praying silently throughout the day and listening for His voice.

SAMMY:

I did not think about it that way, Pastor. On those very busy days, I think it will help refresh my spirit if I make it a point to spend at least a little time in the morning and then stay in touch with God throughout the day.

PASTOR FIN:

On other days – and hopefully most of the days – you will be able to spend more time in Bible study and prayer. When you were at the translation workshop, each day started with a time of devotion for the group of translators.

SAMMY:

Yes, it was wonderful to be able to share in that way. But it is not something that is possible now that we are back home. We cannot meet together that way every day.

PASTOR FIN:

It is true, Sammy, that we would not be able to have devotions with all of the translators every day. Maybe we could try to get all of you or most of you together for devotions once or twice a month. There is value in getting together and discussing what you are reading, the context of it and how you can apply it to your life. We could look at some passages from the book of Scripture that the team is working on at the time. We can

pray together and encourage each other. We could put together a Scripture reading list for the month, so that even if we are not all together, we all could be reading and meditating on the same Scripture each day.

SAMMY:

Those are great ideas, Pastor. I think that would be helpful if we could do that.

PASTOR FIN:

Well, thank you for inspiring those ideas, Sammy. I will work on making it happen. On some days, perhaps you and your wife, Siara, could have your devotional time together. After reading Bible verses, you would be able to discuss them and what they mean to you. Then you would be able to pray together.

SAMMY:

I would love to do that, Pastor, and I think Siara would agree. We can give that a try. If our son wakes up early, we will have him join us as well.

PASTOR FIN:

That sounds good, Sammy. Having devotions as a family can make it a meaningful time for each of you. I know that some families have their devotions together after dinner. One family reads the Bible verses and then they discuss the reading and pray with each other. I know that your son is young, but this is a good time for him to see you engaged in reading the Bible and praying. He will grow up knowing that is an important part of your life and that you want it to be important for him, too.

SAMMY:

Pastor, we have talked about the importance of devotions, when to have them and others that we could have then with. We have talked about what should be included in a devotional time, but I would like to know more about that. What resources can I use for my devotions? The Bible study materials and devotionals I have now are in our national language. I can read our national language, but it is a little more difficult to me and sometimes does not feel as relevant.

PASTOR FIN:

Once we have the New Testament in our language, we could also develop our own studies and reading plans to help encourage people who will have the same struggles with consistent reading that you are having right now. We could develop a plan that shows people how they can read through the New Testament in a year. We also could write some simple studies to help people learn about topics like the salvation message of Jesus, God's forgiveness, our forgiveness, friendship, failure and grace. These are studies that would speak to people where they are struggling.

SAMMY:

It would be wonderful if we had some of these things in our language! Just imagine how useful they would be for our people and how much they would help our people grow in their faith.

PASTOR FIN:

I agree with you, Sammy. That will take a while, though. I want to suggest some ways to help enrich your devotional time now and be sure the time is meaningful for you. At the workshop, the devotion for the group was from the Gospel of Mark that you and the others were translating. Did you find that helpful?

SAMMY:

Yes, Pastor. It was so good to have those devotions to start off every morning. We joined together to learn more about Mark. And it was relevant to what we were doing because we were working on translating that book. It also was helpful because it was conducted in our mother-tongue language.

PASTOR FIN:

Until we have monthly recommended readings for the team, my suggestion would be to read several verses in the book that you are currently translating. That will help when you read and concentrate on passages you are assigned. Reading passages of the book that you are not assigned will be helpful, too, by giving context to the passages you are working on.

SAMMY:

But how can I deepen my understanding of the passages? I want to be able to gain more insight into what is written, why it is written, and what it means for me.

PASTOR FIN:

That is a great goal, Sammy. As you know from your work with translation, there are many aids online that all are available without cost. The website is bibleineverylanguage.org. On that site, there are notes and questions and explanations of words. While they are not in our mother-tongue language right now, there are nearly 500 languages that have at least some material available on the website.

SAMMY:

That is a good reminder, Pastor. I used that site during the translation workshop, but I did not think about using it to help with my own devotions. Are there other resources?

PASTOR FIN:

Yes, there are some that are available in our national language. Some of them are the same as you might have used for checking during your time at the translation workshop. For example, you could use a study Bible or a Bible commentary to help to deepen your

understanding. There are some devotional books that are written by church leaders that include a Scripture passage, a brief sermon and prayer suggestions for each day. I am sure you have seen the ones from Our Daily Bread that we have at the church. There also are online Bible studies. Some are text and some are videos. So, if you are working on translating the book of Romans, you may want to use a Bible study that concentrates on the book of Romans to give you greater insight into that book.

SAMMY:

Thank you, Pastor. I can do an internet search to find some options. And if you have any specific recommendations, I would welcome your suggestions.

PASTOR FIN:

Of course, Sammy. Pastors and church leaders can be good resources for ideas for Bible commentaries, study Bibles, and devotional books and videos. Perhaps you and I could sit down and talk periodically so you can share with me the ups and downs of your journey through translation.

SAMMY:

Talking with you today has been very helpful. I am sure that I will take you up on that offer. I am so thankful that you were able to join our broadcast today. Could you please close us now in prayer?

PASTOR FIN:

I would be honored to. Please join me. Dear Lord, Thank You for the privilege of being able to translate Your Word into our mother-tongue language so it speaks to us in a personal way. Bless those of us who are involved in the task of translation. Bless those who will hear Your words for the first time in the language of their heart. Keep us close to You, Lord, through regular and meaningful time with you in study and prayer. In our busy lives, help us to pause and hear Your Word when you tell us to be still and know that You are God. Open our hearts and minds to what your Word has to say to us. When we pray, help us to listen for Your voice. We ask this in Your Holy Name. Amen.

SAMMY:

Amen. Thank you, Pastor. And thank you to everyone who is listening today. We pray that you will join us for our next broadcast, when we will talk more about staying on track with a plan for Bible translation. In the meantime . . .

If you have any questions or want to start a project of your own, please send an email to reachingalldialects@gmail.com or radio@wycliffeassociates.org or call/text: