

Broadcast 22 – Overcoming Discouragement During Translation

OLIVER:

Hi everyone, this is Oliver.

MARA:

And this is Mara. We have been working at this for several months now, and it has become routine in some ways. However, the joy and urgency have not faded.

OLIVER:

No, they have not. I am so thankful for our team and how hard everyone is working on this project.

MARA:

Yes, we have come so far, especially when I think of the difficulties and trials we faced. I know Jesus says we should expect troubles in this world. So, it should not surprise us that we had our share of those. Sometimes it has slowed us down. Sometimes it has discouraged us. But by God's grace none of these troubles stopped us.

OLIVER:

Today we want to talk about some of the personal challenges and trials we experienced, and how God has helped us to trust Him and grow through each one.

MARA:

Then we will share some challenges we faced when inviting others to start their own translations. But first, a few stories from our own situation. Oliver, do you want to first share what your family has been through recently and how it has kept you from focusing on the translation work?

OLIVER:

Okay. Several weeks ago, my wife discovered she was pregnant with our second child. We were so excited when we found out Siara was pregnant. We had no reason to think anything would be difficult with this pregnancy because her first pregnancy was very normal, and our baby was born healthy. I was at work when I received a call that she was very sick, and someone was taking her to the hospital. I needed to leave right away and meet them in town at the hospital.

MARA:

I remember that. We were all so worried.

OLIVER:

Yes, it was very scary. I sent a SMS message, sharing my need for prayer with some of the other translators. One called me and read to me from John chapter 14, what he just drafted. It was Jesus speaking to His disciples promising them His peace. What stood out to me was Jesus said His peace is not fragile like the world's peace. I thought my wife and my baby are so fragile. And I even felt fragile, but it comforted me to know Jesus gives a peace that is strong, even when we feel fragile.

I received many messages from the other translators, telling me they were praying for my wife and the baby and me. I didn't stop praying as I traveled, and I experienced God's strong peace. When I arrived at the hospital, I knew my wife would be okay. As soon as I arrived, they took me to her room. She was sleeping and had a monitor checking her blood pressure and pulse. I sat next to her and started praying some more. It was several hours before she woke up and saw me there. In that time the doctor came and shared the sad news with me that she lost the baby.

MARA:

What did Siara say when she woke up?

OLIVER:

I was so relieved when she woke up, I hugged her, and she cried. We were both so sad, but we thanked God that she made it to the hospital and got help. The doctor said if she had not come out of the village when she did, she and the baby both would have died. I shared with Siara the verses about Jesus' peace. This comforted us both together.

MARA:

That was a difficult trial. I am sure you and Siara still feel the loss. Thank you for sharing how God comforted you with His Word and His people, even when things did not go the way you would choose.

OLIVER:

We are not the only ones who faced troubles. Several translators from a different village went through a big challenge around that same time. In their village, heavy rains and very deep flooding destroyed half of their village. Several of the translators lost their homes and their gardens. It was devastating. They were not sure how they would have food to feed their families. Even though they did not want to, they had to put their translation project on hold so they could help the village. News of the flooding spread, and the village has received a lot of help with supplies and food and lodging from neighboring villages and churches.

MARA:

These stories remind me we are in the middle of a spiritual battle. Satan does not want people to have God's Word. He is trying to discourage us and stop us from obeying God and working on translating the Bible. Here in the village, we have had many delays that make it hard to stay consistent with the work. One of the women on our team has been sick for several weeks and has not been at any of our checking workshops. Another translator has been traveling and has also missed the last two checking sessions. I do not mean to say these people are not dedicated to getting God's Word translated into their language. I know how hard it is to keep going when so many other responsibilities demand our attention. Sometimes when others could not come to our meetings, I felt like maybe it does not matter that much. I thought maybe we should cancel our checking time. I get discouraged, and then I remind myself that discouragement can be Satan's tool against this work.

OLIVER:

We depend on each other in this process. But we depend most of all on God. Satan is doing everything he can to stop the word from spreading. And sometimes we fall into his trap and make it easy for him.

MARA:

Yes, sadly that is true.

OLIVER:

And it is not just you and me. Others also can be deceived and miss out on this great blessing. I was part of a team that went from this village to our neighbors to invite them to the next translation workshop. When we got there and shared the invitation with the pastor and elders of the church, they seemed excited at first. Then they asked how much their people would be paid to do this work and how many people they wanted on each team. We explained to them no one is offering to pay them. We told them the payment was spiritual and eternal. They shrugged and said they would not work for free. They said if

they were not paid, then they would not come. They said they would keep using the Bible in their national language.

MARA:

This can be difficult if the pastor and elders are not interested.

OLIVER:

Our pastor was never against the translation project. And he has become enthusiastically involved since, never asking, or expecting to be paid for doing the work. My friends who want to have Scripture in their language might be offended if I suggest they start a project if they think their pastor and leaders are against it.

MARA:

I understand. We are blessed with a pastor and many leaders in our church who want to contribute to the translation project. And that is not going to be true everywhere. One way to encourage others is to invite them to a checking meeting one Sunday after church. They could be shown how to do the steps and encouraged to try it on a small portion of Scripture without starting a whole project. They could share a few verses, a chapter even, with their pastor. He might change his mind if he sees people in his community are willing to work on translation without getting paid. He might even change his mind if he were to hear Scripture being read in his own language.

OLIVER:

That is a good idea Mara. Another idea is to take portions of what we completed to show them what can be accomplished! Taking a pastor who has done translation work is also a good idea. A pastor's testimony might be able to convince them a translation would benefit their community.

MARA:

The challenges we shared are not meant to scare or discourage our listeners. Instead, we talk about these things to encourage you. We continue to see God's faithfulness. He has shown us Satan wants to deter us from our translation. He has given us the desire and the boldness to remain faithful.

OLIVER:

Yes, and we are not alone. The stories shared from other teams remind us we all live in a world full of sin and loss and suffering. All of us will face troubles. We might feel like giving up. But we cannot allow ourselves to be discouraged. God's Word brings hope. Just like the passage on Jesus' peace comforted my wife and me, He uses His Word to comfort and encourage others. Being faithful in the translation project is worth every trial, because we know it is God's precious message to us. We do not want anything to prevent us from getting that message out to our people.

MARA:

Before we close, I want to share with you a story of hope from last weekend's checking workshop. I am drafting the book of Philippians. When we came together last weekend to do the checking steps together, we decided to focus on Philippians first. Jade was checking Philippians chapter 2. Suddenly she stood up and cried out, "Listen to this!" and she read my draft of verse 13. This is the verse that says God is working in us to give us both the desire and the power to obey Him. She was almost crying as she read it. Then she said, "That is what we are all experiencing! God gives us the desire to be here, even when we are tired, discouraged, or have much other work. God gives us the power to translate His message. Remember how we felt when we first started? None of us thought we were qualified. None of us thought we could translate Scripture and we were afraid we would mess up. But now we see God is

the one giving us His wisdom and power. It is His work. We please Him when we obey because He is the one making it possible.”

OLIVER:

Thanks, Mara. When I am drafting Scripture, God speaks to my heart. And when we work together as a team to check it, God speaks to our hearts together. It was a reminder of His hope and goodness. Checking Philippians together renewed our strength. In a couple weeks, we will be gathering for a community event for Philippians. We will be using a new resource for checking called the Reviewer’s Guide. It is a series of questions both broad and specific to help readers express their understanding of the meaning and purpose of a passage. This will help us refine our translation even more.

MARA:

I am excited to work through that book with our community assessors. It is sure to be a blessing to everyone. And I look forward to working with this new resource as well.

OLIVER:

Thank you everyone, for listening. We hope you feel encouraged by the powerful truths of God’s Word. He keeps giving us hope and strength and we are grateful for the opportunity to share that testimony with you.

If you have questions about your current project or want to start a project in your own mother-tongue language, please call or text (local country partner info) or send an email to reachingalldialects@gmail.com or radio@wycliffeassociates.org.