

Thoughts for a Terrific Day: Fireworks

(TFATD-31)

On a big day of celebration there was a great display of fireworks. It had been a long time since we had seen them. The fireworks that night were extra extravagant. It was to celebrate that the capital city of our country was 100 years old. We were amazed at how bright and beautiful the fireworks looked. Sometimes the sky was completely covered in explosions of coloured light. It was loud too, but the view was worth it.

Another time we were able to see fireworks was on New Year's Eve. Here is the boys' story about it:

"We were coming home from a long cricket game that we played at the park with some friends who had come over to play cricket too, and we were wishing to see fireworks, as it was New Years Eve.

"Our daddy looked on the internet and found out that near the river there was to not only be midnight fireworks but also earlier evening fireworks. However, it was only a few minutes until the evening show would start to blast. So our dad told us to quickly run and hop into the car. We didn't want to miss anything so we obeyed and popped into the car quickly.

"When we were in the car we prayed and told Jesus how it would be nice if we got to see the fireworks, and if we made it there in time. And Jesus answered our prayer and did miracles to get us there. We drove through the streets and not a single red light faced us. The streets hardly had any traffic, and there was one green traffic light after the next.

"We arrived in time! The show was starting as we were nearing the place and parking the car, but we were able to see nearly the whole show. And what a show we saw! The fireworks display was the best ever! There were big fireworks and small. There were loud fireworks and there were quiet ones too. It was a happy New Years Eve! "

Watching those beautiful and amazing displays of light reminded me a bit of how amazing it will be when Jesus comes back in the clouds again—like He promised to do. If people can make something look so great, can you imagine what kind of show there will be in the sky when the King of kings arrives to announce His return? I'm sure it will be better than the best fireworks show anyone has ever seen.

We looked over some of the verses in Matthew 24 where Jesus was telling His disciples a bit about what it will be like when He comes back. It sounds pretty wild and magnificent. But I think even our greatest ideas won't bring to our imagination just how marvellous and far-out it will be. Simply magnificent!

Jesus tell us in the Bible to be faithful, everyday, because when He returns we'll wish we were doing just what He asked us to do.

It's like when I say to the boys, "Please clean up the toys, and as soon as the meal is cooked I'm going to come and check on your work, and call you to eat. Those that are doing what I asked them to do will get a reward."

The children might not know the exact second that I will come to call them, but if they don't focus on the work, they might be rather embarrassed or ashamed when I pop by and find them just fiddling around.

So is it with us. Jesus has a job for all of us to do—to help others come to know about His love and to tell them about Him. We need to do the best we can, and not assume we have all the time in the world, and

that we can just goof off and waste time on foolish activities. If we want to make Him pleased when He suddenly does show up, we'll need to act like each minute could be our last, and show through our actions and choices that we want to make Him happy. We'll be so glad that we did when we finally receive our special rewards.

Matthew 24:30b-31a They shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet.

Thoughts for a Terrific Day: Warnings and Promises

(TFATD-32)

My oldest son wanted to have a bit of fun—even though it wasn't the safest idea. He'd taken a piece of wood and propped it up on the backdoor's steps, so that it slanted down and made a ramp. He wanted to zoom down it on his scooter.

I prayed with him for protection, and then let him try it. However, I did warn him of the danger of doing it without shoes on. The rough cement wouldn't feel too great if skidded against. He didn't think anything would happen and chose not to put shoes on. It's interesting how confident or "safe" you can feel if something hasn't happened to you yet. Others can warn you and try to protect you, but if it's something new you are trying, and you've never had something go wrong—after all it's new and you've never done it before—then it's easy to brush off the advice of others.

The best thing to do in that situation is to ask the Lord about it. People can warn you of all sorts of things when you are trying something new. Some of the things they say may happen and are worth listening to; others are unnecessary worries. But to think that you, on your own, can prevent some trouble from happening is unrealistic. No one on Earth can make something happen or not happen, completely on their own. But Jesus knows what's best. So it's good to listen to others, and then check with the Lord about it. He knows better than anyone else.

Well, in that situation, the warned-about accident did happen, and a painful scrape on his foot was a reminder for a long time while it healed, that it's good to listen to the warnings of others and not to assume nothing bad will happen, just because we *think* it won't.

What about when, instead of a warning, someone tells us, "Everything will be okay! Don't worry. Go ahead!" ? Will things always go well, just because someone said so? No person on Earth actually can make or not make something happen, all the way, on their own. Like the time this same boy was on his bike and there was a light downgrade on a bumpy dirt pathway, with some rocks here and there. He wondered if it was the best to bike down it, or if perhaps it would be better to walk the bike down. When he was deciding what to do, someone told him with confidence, "You'll be fine if you go down it."

But was he? Actually, he wasn't. He had a big fall, thankfully missing getting worse hurt than he did. He was very upset because the sudden fall not only made him feel real hurt, but surprised him. He somehow thought that because someone said he would be fine, that he actually would indeed be fine. But can a person actually stop you from falling and getting hurt? Can they make you do everything perfectly well? Can they change the conditions of the Earth, the weather, other's actions, and so forth so as to make everything totally fine for you and work out just as they say it may? No. Only Jesus can do that.

So we are to pray and listen to the One who truly knows what is best, and will help to make all things work out for good in the end for us, as we love, obey and trust Him.

Proverbs 1:5 A wise man will hear, and will increase learning; and a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels:

Thoughts for a Terrific Day: Electricity Truck

(TFATD-33)

We'd known for a few weeks that on a certain day the electricity would be turned off, due to an electricity pole being replaced. We were concerned that it would be difficult without electricity. If it was cold (since it was the end of winter still) we wouldn't have heating. We couldn't cook on our electric stove, and the food in our freezer might melt. We were also looking forward to seeing the truck that might be used for the job. We thought, for some reason that it was to be the electrical pole near our house that would be getting fixed.

When we woke in the morning, on the day it was to happen, we prayed for everything to work out well. Here's how it did:

- A friend let us put our food in their freezer for the day.
- We cooked our food for the whole day, first thing in the morning.
- The day was warm and sunny, and not only didn't we need our heaters, but we even put on our shorts in the afternoon!

We felt we never even missed not having electricity!

And for a real surprise, when we drove to a nearby neighbourhood that has a pine forest, for our morning hike and exercise time, we saw something unexpected. We thought that while we were gone on our walk, we'd miss seeing the workmen and their truck, working near our house. But as it turned out, it was some other electrical pole they were replacing, not the one right near our house, and we wouldn't have seen them. However, as we started to hike we were so surprised to see that the very truck and workmen we'd hoped to see were parked right nearby where we were walking! If we hadn't gone there, we might have missed seeing them. It was so amazing!

2 Samuel 7:28-29 O Lord God... thy words be true, and thou hast promised this goodness unto thy servant: With thy blessing let the house of thy servant be blessed forever.

Thoughts for a Terrific Day: Vacation Fun

(TFATD-34)

Nature Cabin

One time we were invited to a wedding that was a few hours' drive away. There would be a cabin that was kind of out in the woods for us to stay in. We were looking forward to it, but it was very rainy. The next day when we were going to drive, the rain stopped and it was nice weather.

The rain stopped again right when the wedding ceremony was going to happen. It was planned to happen outside. Jesus answered our prayers.

Also because we were kind of out in nature, there were lots of mosquitoes. But by a miracle, inside our cabin when we went to bed at night, no mosquitoes bothered us at all. We were surprised! Jesus kept us from any bugs or other creatures that were around. We had a safe, nice trip.

Luxury Cabin

Last year we got to go on a fun vacation for four days near a nice beach. We had the special treat of staying in a "luxury cabin". It had a huge bath with water jets that worked and made the water bubbly. It was sunny and warm the whole time. We could wear shorts, even though it was winter! That's how nice the weather was.

We got to splash in the water at the beach, and play there. We hiked around. We got to see wild bunny rabbits, and some kangaroos came so close that they hopped right up to our cabin. We even got to see whales swimming, splashing their tails, diving and spraying water quite close to where we were standing.

First we saw them far away, and we prayed for them to come close, but they just seemed to swim out further. Then as we walked along the rocky part of the beach to a new area, another team of whales came swimming past us very close. We could see them so easily. It was very special. The woman who worked at that campground said that it had been a very long time since the whales had come that close. Jesus made it happen just for us right then, in answer to our prayers.

Another answer to prayer was that our car worked very well. Right before we went on our vacation it started to have a problem, and it wouldn't turn on right away. We needed to get it checked, but the mechanic wasn't free to check our car until after our vacation. So we prayed, and then our car worked perfectly well for all the long driving.

Jesus took good care of us. We didn't have any accidents. We were healthy and fine for the whole time. We got to see beach sunrises and sunsets. We even found natural sponges on the seashore.

Camping and the Mallet

When we were on our camping trip and were on a walk with Daddy, we found a mallet. It was rubber with a wooden handle. It was discarded in some corner of nature, off the road where the boys were exploring. It was just what we needed to help put up one of our tents. It was a special sign of the Lord's love. He knew what we were going to need and it encouraged us, especially as one of the tents we got was quite difficult to put up. Because we had our mallet it made it seem easier as we could hammer in the pegs. It was safer for the children to use when trying to help, than a regular hammer, since as it had a rubber head.

Isaiah 32:18 And my people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting places.

Thoughts for a Terrific Day: Coconut milk

(TFATD-35)

By Liam (7)

I wanted to crack a coconut to eat for snack, and I grabbed one out of the fridge. However, I forgot that I was supposed to take the milk out first. So I took it to our backyard cement pathway and I threw it down—which is the way we crack them here. As soon as I noticed that I hadn't taken out the milk, I thought that it was a bad coconut and was slimy. But when I noticed that the two halves were bright white I realized that it was actually the coconut's milk that was on the cement. I was a bit sad—I mean a lot sad! All that good milk was wasted. I cried for awhile as it would have been much better if I had asked my mum to trickle the milk down into a cup before cracking it.

I was sitting on a kitchen chair crying and crying, then my dad remembered a music piece that Beethoven had composed named, "The Rage Over the Lost Penny." Daddy decided to find it on you-tube for me to listen to, to cheer me up a bit. It was a song that Beethoven had written after he dropped a penny mistakenly, and it had rolled along the path to a drain and fell inside. Beethoven tried to get it out of the drain but he couldn't, so when he walked home that day he composed that piece of music.

When we listened to this composition daddy realized that it was a song that he was familiar with, but that he hadn't know the name of. He was glad to discover this mystery. I liked the tune and later that day I started learning how to play it on the piano, with daddy helping me.

Our mum then checked out the last coconut in the fridge. It had been there for a while so there was a big chance that it was bad. But she prayed before opening it, and then she poked a hole to get the milk out. When she drained the milk, to her pleasant surprise it had twice as much milk as the coconuts normally had, and it was sweet good tasting milk. What a miracle! And the coconut meat was real good too. So it was like we hadn't even lost the first coconut milk after all. Plus I got to learn a new song on the piano! Jesus made it up to us and made it all right in the end.

John 14:18 I [Jesus] will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.

Thoughts for a Terrific Day: Water Spill

(TFATD-36)

Have you ever spilled water on a picture you drew—and it got messed up a bit, or even ruined? One of my boys had drawn an elaborate and colourful picture. We wanted it to last a long time, so we laminated it. "That will preserve it!" we thought. But one day, to my son's dismay, the picture had fallen in a spill of water, and somehow water got inside and made a part of the picture ruined, blending the colours together.

Water in the right place at the right time and in the right amount is life-giving and refreshing. It brings good health, and keeps your body working properly. In fact it's absolutely essential. It's a must. Not just for

people, but for plants and animals too. All creatures and all seeds need some sort of moisture to live and grow and thrive.

But water in the wrong place or in the wrong amounts, or at the wrong time can cause problems. It can cause metal to rust, wood to rot, cloth to grow mildew and mould, and cause accidents if left as a puddle on a slippery floor. Too much rain can cause flooding and bring all sorts of troubles and disruptions. If someone doesn't know yet how to swim, a swimming pool filled with water can be a real danger.

Once water is poured out all around, it can't really be gathered up again, and put back into the container. If you spill a pitcher of water on the table, you may be able to wipe it up and dry things, but you can't gather every drop and place it back into the pitcher.

In so many ways water can remind us of something else that begins with the same letter. Can you guess? Words! Words said at just the time they are needed are appreciated. Words that are life-giving and refreshing are welcome and essential to people's inspiration. Jesus even compared His words to water—living water. His Words bring life!

However, just talking, especially when you don't have something positive to say, won't bring any good results. Just saying what first comes to your mind, or blabbing on just for the sake of talking, can bring unwanted results. Words are real things that will affect those around. When we quickly blurt something out, without giving thought about the consequences of saying just what we feel like saying, it can be like a cup of spilled water. If we are so interested in ourselves and what's on our minds that we go on and on talking about things--things that those listening don't really need to hear—it can be a like a flood of words.

Once words are said, we may be able to explain or apologize if we spoke something we wish we'd said differently, or wish we hadn't said at all, but we can never completely erase them from other's hearts and minds—just like water can't be picked up all the way. Words are things that should be poured out, or spoken, at the right time, in the right way, in the right amount, in order for them to be a blessing. Before we speak today, let's imagine that it's like a pitcher of water that is about to pour out—and plan where it should be poured, and just the right amount that will be a blessing and benefit to others.

Proverbs 10:11a The mouth of a righteous man is a well of life.

Proverbs 25:11 A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver.

Thoughts for a Terrific Day: Little Miracles

(TFATD-37)

(By Liam,6, and Charles,5)

Winter Boots

While in Canada it was cold and we didn't have winter boots. Then someone sent over boots that their children didn't need any more. The boots fit us just great, and even were the right colour to match our coats.

Protection

Our younger brother slipped on some spilled water on the tile floor. He fell hard backwards. But amazingly enough, his head only landed on a soft, upside down, plastic, round container. It was on the floor in the exact place that his head would have hit the hard, tile floor. He got hardly any bonk at all. He got up and was just fine.

A Train Set

We'd seen pictures of a duplo train set advertised, and thought it looked real fun. Of course it was too expensive to buy it. But Jesus surprised us this Christmas by giving us a whole big box full of not only the train set, but lots of other duplo vehicles, people, blocks, and helicopters.

How did that happen? For some reason Mummy and Daddy looked in a newspaper they very rarely look at. And just that day there was advertised "Duplo Train Set" by a man who's children were now teens, and they didn't need or want it any more. Compared to what it would have cost to buy it all new, it was very cheap. It was like getting a box full of tons of presents. It had so many fun new things to play with and build with.

Jesus knows what we are thinking and wanting. We may not get everything we like, at just the time we want it, but He sure knows fun ways to encourage us and surprise us. And it's extra fun that way, as we appreciate it more than if we always were flooded with everything as soon as we wanted it. Jesus knows what is best.

Psalm 1:6 For the Lord knoweth the way of the righteous.

Thoughts for a Terrific Day: Garlic

(TFATD-38)

Using garlic in soups or cooking it fried veggies really adds to the flavour. But have you ever tasted raw, cut garlic? It's pretty strong and doesn't feel too great on your tongue. It's best when it is cooked and used in the appropriate ways.

We needed more garlic the other day, and I was wishing for a whole bunch, rather than just one head, as then it wouldn't run out so fast. I hadn't mentioned yet to my husband that we needed some, but then a day or two later I see on the kitchen table a package of several heads of garlic! Jesus knew what I was thinking and gave my husband the thought when he went into a store, to also get, for the first time, this big pack! It came at just the right time, as we soon all got the flu for several days. Nice warm soups and broth, favoured with the healthful ingredient of garlic, was nice to have.

I was thinking about garlic one day, and how it can remind us of God's Word. The Bible says, "Taste and see that the Lord is good!" (Psalm 34:8) So if we have His thoughts and His Words in our life, and we are proving His promises to be true, we'll have goodness nourishing us, just like a tasty, delicious meal.

Also, the Bible says, “He sent His Word and healed them.” (Psalm 107:20) So just like some foods have health benefits, so does listening to God’s Word.

But does this mean that every verse or story in the Bible has the same benefits if it’s read to little children as if it’s read by mature adults? I wouldn’t give raw garlic to a baby or toddler, no matter how good it was for them. They wouldn’t understand that it was good for them, as they would be distracted by the very uncomfortable feeling it gave them in their mouth. When it’s cooked, and when their bodies are able to digest it properly, then it both can be enjoyed as well as beneficial.

Experience and growth is like the time taken to cook the garlic. Some things are good and great for young children to hear from the Bible, and very important too—like the wonderful story of Creation, the miracles of Jesus, the examples of people’s love for others, as well as many good verses that teach us about prayer, about God’s love, and how to praise Him. Then there are some Bible stories and verses that will be better understood or “digested” when a child gets a bit older, and has more experience to help them grasp the lessons better. Some stories are good for teens and adults, who have grown up learning about the Lord for many years, and it adds to the bricks of their life’s building of faith.

I read to my children all that will be good for them to hear and know now; they memorize verses; we read appropriate Bible stories and look at good Bible story illustrations. But they also know that there are some things I’m keeping to share with them when they get older. It will be more interesting for them then, as they will be able to understand it better later on.

So, just like garlic, time and experience will make all kinds of verses and stories in the Bible be a tasty treat, when presented at the right time, age and maturity. But any day, and at any age, we can still feast on God’s Word, as there is still so much to read and choose from that will benefit everyone!

1 Peter 2:2-3 As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby: If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious.

Thoughts for a Terrific Day: Weather

(TFATD-39)

Have you ever prayed for something, but then it didn’t happen just as you had hoped, or your prayer took a little longer to be answered than you wished? Jesus hears and answers every prayer—the prayers of everyone that make their requests to Him with faith. He has the full view of everyone, and sees all the needs, and chooses to do what is best for you and others too.

Take the weather for example. Maybe you want it to be sunny, but someone else desperately needs it to rain. Somehow our amazing Jesus is able to help each and everyone. If we have faith that when we pray that the best things can happen, we won’t be worried or disappointed if things take a bit longer, or even if they turn out differently than we expect. If we’ve prayed and told Jesus what we need, then we’ve done our part, and we can then relax and trust that He’s in control and will do what we and others most need and what will be best.

Here’s something that happened one time that reminded us how loving and in-control Jesus is of the weather, when we pray. He takes everyone’s needs into account and does what is best.

We heard that our farmer friends were in great need of rain. They have sheep and cows on their natural farm. The ground was getting too dry, and some fresh rain to make the grass grow well for them was needed. We prayed fervently for rain so they could have what they needed.

However, the weekend passed without rain. It must have been hard for them to wait, not knowing just how long it would take until the rain came. It was a warm and sunny weekend. But Monday morning it started to rain, and was rainy for a few days. We were so glad that our prayers, and their prayers, were answered, and the animals would be happier too!

Why didn't it rain right when we asked for it, and exactly on those days when the farmer would have been so happy to have it? Well, it was a special weekend. It was Mother's Day. There were probably a lot of mothers in need of encouragement and families that had planned to go out to parks for fun together on that day. If it had been raining, many families would have been disappointed, and the dear mothers wouldn't have had as much fun. It was the only "Mother's Day" weekend in the year. It would take another year to get that chance to celebrate it.

Then as soon as the weekend passed, the rain came. So Jesus made everyone happy!

But did it just start off first thing in the morning gushing down and pouring down rain? No. Why? Well, there were lots of other things that Jesus had to work out too. Let me explain.

A while back, the pipe that brings water to our house had burst in the night. Workmen had to come in the night to dig up the pipe and replace it. However, it also dug up part of our driveway, and that needed to get fixed. When was it scheduled by the road repair team to begin work on our driveway's entrance? —The Monday that the rain finally came. If it was raining hard, the work would have been put off until another day. But because it was just lightly raining first thing in the morning, the good hardworking men still came to fix our driveway. When they were done their work it rained harder—later on.

So why didn't the rain just wait for a few hours more on Monday, and stay completely dry near our house, and then start raining when the work was completed? Well, for some reason the fumes from those types of construction vehicles really affects us in a not-so-good way. But those work vehicles are very interesting to watch. After all, it's not every day that diggers and dump trucks come to your house! Because it was raining, the children didn't want to stand outside to watch them working, but they got a great view out the big widow that was facing the road, and saw the whole scene from inside. The gentle rain helped to protect us from the fumes in that way, and made our day a happier one, yet it wasn't enough to stop the work altogether.

We saw through these things how knowledgeable Jesus is about each detail that each one needs. He showed His love and care, and ability to answer prayer in the best ways possible.

Isaiah 44:3 For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring.

Thoughts for a Terrific Day: Jesus loves us!

(TFATD-40)

Trip to a Fair

We were wondering where to go one day for our family outing. We stopped to pray together and ask Jesus what would be best. There were lots of choices. Jesus helped us to know that the best thing to do that day was to go to a spring-time outdoor fair. We got to see something real fun there that day. We saw a fire truck displayed, and the men there were letting children come on to the truck and try on firemen helmets and coats, as well as spray the fire truck hose! We got to sit in the front seat as well and talk to the driver, and push the button that turned on the siren! It was very fun. We saw the sign near their fire truck display and it said that they were only there at that fair for four of the days out of the month that others would be showing their displays at the fair. So the day we went there, was one of the few days they were there. We came on just the right day! Jesus wanted to show us His love, and things went well because we'd prayed and listened to Him when making our plans for the day.

Lego Set

(By Charles, 6)

I really wanted a dirt bike transporter Lego set. I'd seen a picture of it and saw it had things I wanted. I prayed very often for it—nearly each morning. Then one day Daddy brought home a reward for each of us, after we had worked hard each day for a couple of weeks practicing and learning our music. Guess what it was? I got the exact Lego set I wanted. Daddy knew I wanted it, and when he went out to get a surprise for us, that was the very set that was in the shop.

Helium Balloons

We wanted some helium balloons for quite some time. Then at a celebration we attended we were given some green and white helium-filled balloons. We held on to them tightly so they wouldn't fly away. But usually balloons here seem to pop very easily. These balloons, however, lasted a very long time—for a week or two—and they never popped. They kept their helium for a long time and they never flew away. They just eventually shrunk in size. Having these fun balloons for so long was very special for us. We were glad for the miracle of the balloons.

Banana Milk Shake

Once there were seven children that needed a snack. They lived in Mexico, and there wasn't much food in the house. I was helping to care for them and had to come up with a snack for them. The house they stayed in was quite far away from town and no one had any spare money to get anything right then. I looked around the kitchen to see what was available. There was one banana, half-a-cup of milk, and a small bit of oatmeal left over from breakfast.

I prayed and took out the blender to begin doing what I could do. I put the banana in the blender with the bit of milk. I put in the small portion of oatmeal. I added plenty of water as well as some ice cubes. When I blended it up, I prayed that it would taste good, and that the children would like it. I also prayed that there would be enough for all the children to have as much as they needed.

After blending it, I poured it out and it filled the seven cups. I was pleased to see that it tasted good and it was enough. The children got a good snack that day. Even though sometimes it didn't always seem like we'd have enough food or what was needed, for some reason we always had what we needed right at the time when we needed it. Jesus took care of us all, and provided for the children.

Ephesians 3:19 And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God.