

Link Letter No.17 August 2014

Hey kids,

I wonder how you are doing? Are you watching the World Cup? I haven't been able to see anything of it since our TV here has not got the right channels. Never mind; there is always plenty to do here!

What makes you sad? I don't mean sad when you are not able to watch your favourite TV programme or are not allowed to eat sweets, but what makes you really sad? I have been thinking about this a lot at the moment as there are lots of things here making me sad, and it's all to do with justice for other people. Sometimes we are



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Ruth is a CMS mission partner seconded to the Children's Department of Across and serving in Yei, South Sudan. Across is an interdenominational Christian NGO that has worked in Sudan for over 30 years. Ruth's ministry includes developing child protection policies, leading trauma workshops and training Sunday school teachers. The years of war in Sudan make this work so vital to a future generation of Sudanese.



I love this pic of the Mango tree as a heart; it reminds me of God's love for the South Sudanese

told that we must always smile, or look on the bright side, or not cry. Is it wrong to love Jesus and at the same time, feel sad? I don't think it is! I think that God has made us with so many emotions, and it's okay to use them. I laugh a lot with my friends here. I feel compassion when I see people suffering. I feel anger when I see injustice and I cry when I feel pain, or I know my friends feel pain.

When we read the bible, we will

see that many people of God in the bible also allowed themselves to be sad. Jesus wept and both Jesus and David asked why God had “forsaken” (left) them. Job had lots of terrible things happen to him, and he asked God “why why why?” There is even a whole book in the bible called Lamentations – and it is full of the sad writings of the prophet Jeremiah.



Fun with some of the Sunday school teachers I work with



This is on the way to one of our communities

we are living with uncertainty and many people fear that the problems will also reach to our area. South Sudan has had so much war, and it breaks my heart to think that things are going backwards, not forwards. Children here need to grow up in peace – like in other countries, and then they can achieve all the good things that God has planned for them to do. My friends here do not want war. They want peace so that the nation can continue to grow.

I have been thinking about this, as there have been a lot of things that I am finding hard here at the moment. I can't share them all with you, but the one I will share is the state of the country I am living in, and which has become home to me with friends I love dearly and am close to. In December, fighting broke out in the capital city, and spread to other areas of the country. My area is okay but



Beautiful South Sudan from the air...

One of the big problems now is that so many people have run away from their homes – over one million people. This means that they have not been able to plant any seeds, many people do not have jobs, and they farm their land and provide for their family that way. The rainy season

is now here and this is the time that the first crops should be nearing harvest. June and July are always what we know as the “*hunger months*” as last year’s crops have all now been eaten, and we are waiting for the next crops to be harvested, but now there will be no crops to harvest. There are estimations that nearly four million people are already at severe risk of food shortage, which will get worse as the year goes on unless there is enough money to buy enough food. People will die – simply because they do not have enough food. Four million is almost one third of all the people living in South Sudan.

This is something which makes me lament, something that makes me sad. These are all innocent people who have got caught up in something bad happening, but it means that they may lose their lives. This is not because of the violence, although many people also have died through that, but because they are now hiding in the bush, or living in a camp, where there is not enough food because they were not able



Showing God's power over this land

to grow their own. I think that this also makes God sad, and I think sometimes when we cry over things like this, we are crying His tears.

The good thing about when we are lamenting – when we are sad and prayerful about it – is that it becomes our worship to God. We pour out our despair and sadness and then we look to Him, knowing that Jesus understands what is going on more than we do, and He is also sad for people who are sad.

Psalms 13 is a good example of this. Maybe you can get your bible and read it. King David is pouring out all his sadness, but by the end of his writings, he is praising God. This is the true way to lament, to be sad as a Christian; it's important we are able to allow ourselves to do that when things are making us really sad.

Perhaps you are able to raise some money to send to help the people of South Sudan; maybe you could ask your teacher if you could do something at school. You can send it through CMS, they have an appeal, or through the Disaster Emergency committee in the UK. But even if this is not possible, you can pray for the people of South Sudan, that they would know God with them in all situations. If there is something which is making you sad now, perhaps you can use this space below to write your lament, your sad writings to God.

Sending lots of love to you all,

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