

Postcards from Portugal

May 2025 | Samuel & Emily Loa-Ferreira
Serving Jesus in Portugal

Olá precious prayer partners,

Two significant events affected Portugal this past week. First, the news of the death of Pope Francis, the most revered and recognised religious figure in Portugal. Then, a national power outage that left tens of millions of people without power across Portugal and Spain for 8+ hours (We're blaming that for the slightly delayed newsletter!).

Both events were reminders of our human frailty. **No matter how revered or “morally esteemed”, even the most influential leaders face death. And no matter how advanced our technologies, a power outage is enough to bring modern life to a grinding halt—no lights, no traffic lights, no hot water, no Wi-Fi.**

It is good to be reminded of our limits! As 1 Peter 1:24–25 says: *“All people are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field; the grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of the Lord endures forever.”* **While we humans wither and our human systems fail, God’s Word remains steady, sure, and eternal.**

It’s a privilege to be sent and supported by each of you, in the work of bringing this eternal word to bear in the lives of the Portuguese people. As you will read in this newsletter, God is providing lots of opportunities for us to share the good news of Jesus and help others be more deeply rooted in him. Thanks for continuing to journey alongside us!

With love,
Sam, Emily and Oli

Answered Prayers

We wanted to encourage you and give God the glory for his kind answer to some prayer requests from our previous newsletters.

- **The women’s evangelistic talk at church seemed to go well. There was one non-believer present who took a copy of Lukes gospel afterwards.** Em taught from 1 Peter 1:24-25 (same verse as above!), and it was her first bible talk in Portuguese! It seemed that people understood her Portuguese as encouraging feedback was given.
- This semester, **about double the amount of [GBU](#) students have been attending bible studies compared to last semester.** That’s double the amount of people that are digging into the riches of God’s word together as they work their way through studies in Luke. Thank you for praying for this!



Em teaching from 1 Peter 1:24-25 at the women's evangelistic talk at church



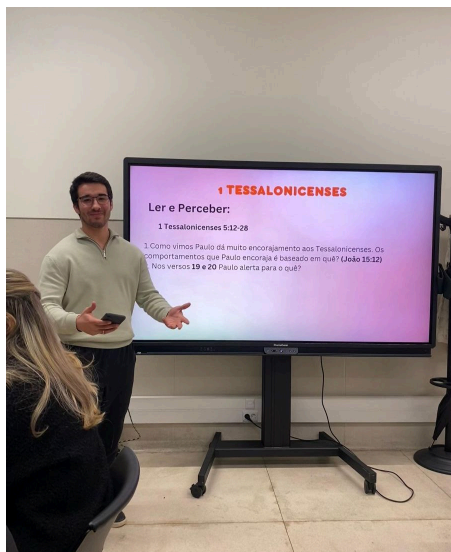
Reading Luke together at one of the GBU Coimbra bible studies

Students Leading Students in God's Enduring Word

Since last year, we have been seeking to equip GBU students to more carefully read the bible and be able to lead others in understanding it the context of a bible study.

Last year Sam trained 15 GBU Coimbra students through a 5 week bible study leaders training course. He has just finished the course this year with 12 more GBU Coimbra students, and he is currently running the course online for 9 students from other GBU groups across Portugal.

It has been wonderful to see God bring about fruit from this. This semester, at GBU's weekly gatherings, 6 students who have done the training, wrote and ran their own inductive bible studies as they worked through a series on 1 Thessalonians and the Sermon on the Mount. They all did a great job! **The best bit for Sam was getting to help students prepare the studies by sitting down and working through the text with them, giving feedback, and seeing students have those 'light bulb' moments as they dug into God's word.** Our desire is that each of these students would be able to take what they've learnt and be a blessing to their local churches, now and for their lifetime.



The 6 GBU Coimbra students that wrote and led their own inductive bible study this semester

Coming Up

On May 7th and 14th, Em will be running workshops with GBU Coimbra students on the topic of “Relationships: Singleness, Dating and Marriage”. It’s a wonderful opportunity to open up the bible and help students see what God has to say about these topics that don’t usually get much airtime at local churches in Portugal, especially singleness. Whilst excited about it, admittedly, Em is a bit daunted by running workshops of

1 hour duration in Portuguese! **It requires mammoth preparation and mental effort.** Sam has helped a lot! Do pray for extra measures of mental capacity, for God to work through his word, and that students would honour Jesus in their relationships.

The academic year is coming to an end in June, which means **Sam is seeking to recruit a new group of student leaders to lead GBU Coimbra for the next academic year.** Do pray for God's provision of faithful, servant hearted men and women to serve as student leaders.



The topic of two upcoming GBU Workshops "Guidance in Relationships: Singleness, Dating and Marriage"

Other Snippets of Life and Ministry in March & April



About 60 students from GBU groups across Portugal gathered for the GBU National Conference in March. The focus was on engaging their university campuses with the gospel.



Special visitors from Aus! An encouraging pastoral visit from the new ECM Australia Director, Rob Petrini and his wife Monica.



In April we attended a conference in Spain for all ECM missionaries working across Europe (500+ in total). We left refreshed by great teaching from God's word and heartening conversations with fellow missionaries. See if you can find us!



Oli at the ECM Conference. Looking all grown up with his name-tag and back pack! 🙄

Prayer Points

- Praise God for electricity, and the reminder the recent nation-wide blackout was of our human frailty and need to depend on God and his enduring word.
- Praise God for the fruit he has brought about from the bible study leaders training as we have seen GBU students lead other students in God's word.
- Pray for the workshops on relationships on May 7th and 14th – for extra measures of mental capacity for Emily to run these in Portuguese, for God to work through his word, and that students would honour Jesus in their relationships.
- Pray for God's provision of faithful, servant hearted students to serve as leaders of GBU Coimbra for the next academic year.



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We are serving with European Christian Mission (ECM). ECM's vision is to share Christ's love in Europe through evangelism, discipleship and church planting in partnership with local believers.