



Click to watch June video update:



Olá precious prayer partners,

Last week, Sam's grandfather, Mário Tavares Ferreira, went to be with the Lord. Mário was a faithful servant of Jesus Christ and played a formative role in the spiritual life of Sam. Here is a reflection from Sam that was shared at his funeral held in Coimbra, Portugal;

"Mário Tavares Ferreira (1939–2025), servant of Jesus Christ. As for righteousness: a sinner, deserving of condemnation- yet in Christ, acquitted and heir to eternal life.

Death is an irresistible tragedy, defined by the French philosopher Luc Ferry, as an irreversible force that takes life in only one direction.

To use an illustration by Phillip Jensen (former Dean of St Andrew's Cathedral, Sydney), we are like cut flowers, with the appearance of life, but in truth, we are dead, cut. We may radiate beauty and release perfume, but before long, we begin to wither. The vibrant colours fade, petals fall, the water becomes foul, and what once was the sweet perfume of life will quickly turn into the truth: the stench of death.

We spend our lives in flower arrangements, trying to improve our colour and fragrance, anesthetising ourselves from the reality of our mortality, hoping that somehow the inevitable won't happen, that the irreversible might reverse.

But the truth is: the irreversible has been reversed. Two thousand years ago, Jesus came into this world and reversed the irreversible. He died and destroyed the one who holds the power of death, to set free those who live in fear of death.

Early on, my grandpa Mário understood his condition, his reality: he was dead and couldn't

resist death. Yesterday he proved it: he did not resist. And yet, his funeral is not a tragedy, for while he still had fragrance, he gave his life to the One who has the power to reverse the irreversible. And so, in full assurance and conviction, he could make his own the words

of the Apostle Paul:

"Death has been swallowed up in victory.

Where, O death, is your victory?

Where, O death, is your sting?

...But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Mário Tavares Ferreira, born dead and died alive in Christ."



What a semester!

The academic year is finishing as students are finishing their final exams. **We look back with deep thankfulness to God for what we think, has been the best semester yet in our 3 years of serving the [GBU](#) in Portugal.** As God's word has been read, studied and taught, we can see him working in the hearts of individual students, producing fruit in their lives as they submit more of their life to the Lordship of Jesus and serve him with joy. What a kindness of God to be able to witness this. The seminars that Emily ran on 'Relationships' and the bible study leaders training that Sam ran were two highlights ([watch the video](#) above to hear more!) In addition to that, **here are some highlights of the semester:**



- **Having Shane (ECM missionary from Ireland) join us as staff in Coimbra.** This has been a huge blessing. **To share the teaching, pastoral and administrative load with another person has been relieving for us and enriching for the students.** Pictured is our little staff team of 3 having a panel discussion at one of the GBU's public bible talks. Shane has been particularly active in discipling male students and giving bible talks. Thank God for Shane!



- **Reading the bible with students.** This is Ana-Luisa, a law student who Em has been reading Colossians with this semester. Ana-Luisa grew up in a church that wasn't focused on teaching the bible and in recent years, through joining a different church and being part of the GBU, she has significantly grown in her knowledge of God's word and desire to live it out. Every time she meets with Em she has already read and extensively annotated the passage! **What an encouragement to see someone so thirsty to drink from God's living word.** Praise God also for the other students who have been discipled one-to-one this semester: Miriam, Alice, Matheus, Matias, Timon and Rai.

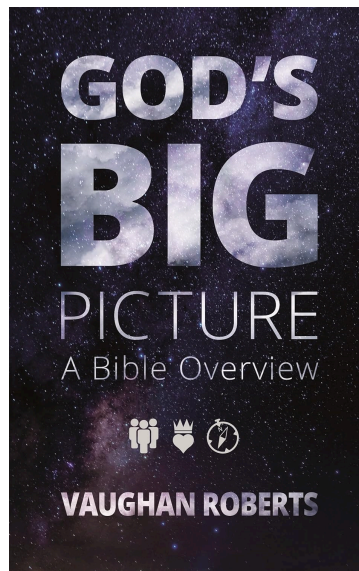


- **A growing sense of unity and trust with the wider GBU Portugal national staff team** (pictured). There is quite a lot of diversity amongst the national staff team in terms of denominational background, theological thinking, and ministry approach. We have noticed increased trust, respect and camaraderie amongst the staff this semester. **We are seeing how the diversity can be leveraged to enrich the GBU ministry.** With this increased trust, our input is being sought not only within our GBU group in Coimbra, but also in other GBU groups in Portugal. Praise God for this.

Summer Projects

With the academic year finishing, the long summer break starts! We have much less contact with students during this time as they go on holidays or go back to their cities or countries. **We will be taking this opportunity to work on some summer projects that we'd love prayer for.**

1. **Writing a bible study series based on the book “God’s Big Picture”** by Vaughan Roberts. We have identified the critical need for Portuguese believers to grow in their biblical theology- understanding the bible as one story of salvation centred around Jesus. Our prayer is that this bible study series will help GBU students in this.
2. **Writing a course to help students write and share their testimony.** When we surveyed the GBU Coimbra students about what training they'd like to receive, the majority of them said training in how to share the gospel with their friends - how encouraging is that!! Our desire with this course is that it would help students know and clearly articulate Jesus' story, their life story, and how those two stories connect.
3. **Getting to know the GBU groups in the cities of “Viseu” and “Guarda”.** The current GBU staff-worker of these cities (Sam's sister, Ana!) will soon be going on maternity leave and Sam will be interim staff-worker. These cities are about 1.5-2 hours away from Coimbra, and Sam's role will be remotely supporting the leaders of these groups by meeting with them online.



God's Big picture- the book we are working on writing a bible study series on. Excitingly, this book just got approval from the publishers to translate into European Portuguese!




Another "summer project" is to take a holiday! In early August we'll be exploring the north of Portugal, near Porto. Oli is ready! Recently, he has been enjoying wearing daddy's sunglasses and running around in the summer sun!

Prayer Points

- Praise God for the life of Samuel's grandpa, Mário, and the hope of resurrection life. Pray for God's comfort for the Ferreira family.
 - Praise God for bible teaching and training opportunities this semester in GBU Coimbra. Pray that through it, students may be equipped for every good work as they serve in the GBU, their local church and beyond.
 - Pray that the GBU students who are being discipled one-to-one will grow in their knowledge, love and service of Jesus as the bible is read with them.
 - Praise God for increased unity within the national GBU Portugal staff team. Pray that the diversity of the team might enrich the GBU ministry.
 - Pray for wisdom, faithfulness and creativity as we write a bible studies series and an evangelism training course during the summer.
 - Pray for a refreshing holiday in August.
-

 emilysamuelf@gmail.com

 ecmaustralia.org/loaferreira



We are serving with European Christian Mission ([ECM](#)). ECM's vision is to see the peoples of Europe transformed in the name of Jesus Christ through evangelism, discipleship and church planting in partnership with local believers across Europe.