

September 20th

Memory Verse

Bless the LORD, O my soul,
and forget not all his benefits:

Who forgiveth all thine iniquities;
who healeth all thy diseases;

Who redeemeth thy life from destruction;
who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies; Psalm 103: 2-4

Tiny children can learn the words in **bold** and know that they have a soul which can praise and thank God for his goodness. The word bless here literally means “kneel.” This is an attitude of worship and praise. The Psalmist is instructing his own soul to, as it were, kneel before God who is the source of everything good. He sees that God forgives his sin and has redeemed or “bought him back” from everlasting destruction in hell. From this the subsidiary statements follow too – God fills our lives with his mercy and loving-kindness. Even every time we experience recovery from illness this is God's doing!

There are various ways the verse can be split up to aid memorising and depending on how many learners there are. Use the way I have laid it out above to help you.

An adventure from History¹

We have had a few lessons about people who circumnavigated the globe. We read about Captain Slocum in his little boat on July 1st, Drake on June 17th and Captain Beach in his submarine on May 10th. Then there was Thomas Stevens who cycled round the world (see the lesson for April 22nd). But who was the *first* person ever to sail right round the globe? Today's story has the answer.

In the fifteenth and early sixteen centuries many famous explorers tried to find a westward route from Europe to the Indies but it was the Portuguese sailor, Ferdinand Magellan (1480-1521), who finally discovered a passage through the strait that now bears his name.



On **September 20th**, 1519, in the flagship *Trinidad*, he led a tiny fleet of five small ships out of **Spain**. He set his course southwards in search of the southernmost tip of the South American continent.

After four months the expedition's hopes were high when Magellan found a huge inlet stretching westwards. He sent two of his ships to investigate and was deeply disappointed when they returned to tell him that all they had found was the mouth of a great river, now known as the **Rio de la Plata**.

Again they set off along the seemingly endless coast, exploring every bay, every inlet. As the weather grew colder, as the storms became more frequent, as their food dwindled until they were strictly rationed, the men grew more and more discontented. Magellan put in to a sheltered bay, intending to rest there until the weather improved, but some of his men mutinied. They seized two of the ships and declared their intention of returning to Spain. Magellan acted with ruthless speed, quelling the mutiny and beheading the leader.

¹ Adapted from Owen, Evan, *What Happened Today?* Book 3 available on the *Mothers' Companion* flashdrive <https://motherscompanion.weebly.com/>

After five months in shelter they set sail again. One ship was wrecked in a storm before they finally entered the 300 mile long **Magellan Strait**, and another deserted while they were exploring one of the many inlets that made the coast of the strait so difficult for navigation. At night, along the southern shore the sailors could see tiny fires flickering on the cliff tops and Magellan named it the Land of Fire (**Tierra del Fuego**).

With great joy the three remaining ships arrived in an ocean that for weeks was so calm that they called it the **Pacific Ocean**.

Magellan expected to reach India soon after entering the Pacific but it was 98 days before they sighted inhabited land. During this time their food ran out. Many of the men died of starvation and exhaustion; the rest were reduced to hunting rats for food, and chewing leather and sawdust.

Reaching the **Philippine Islands** meant that Magellan had joined up westward and eastward routes, but he was not on board the only one of the five ships to reach **Spain** in 1522. The great explorer was killed in a fight with the Philippine Islanders. Of the 265 men who had left Spain three years before only 19 returned: the first men to circumnavigate the world.

Map work

I have highlighted the places on Magellan's route in **green**. Trace his route in your atlas or on a globe and compare the routes taken by the different circumnavigators you have read about in your lessons. Your atlas should give you a good idea of the twists and turns of the Magellan Strait. Try to imagine how hard it would be to navigate the passage through.

Something to listen to and something to sing

Today is the anniversary of the death in 1957 of **Finland**'s most famous composer Jean Sibelius. Sibelius is famous for his seven symphonies and his tone-poems, the best known of which is *Finlandia*.

Finlandia was written for a set of six historical tableaux for a pageant in 1899 that celebrated and supported the Finnish press against **Russian** oppression and censorship. Look at your atlas and see where these two countries are and you will understand the situation. Find a recording of *Finlandia* to listen to.²



2 Here for example: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F5zg_af9b8c

Sibelius's biographer, Tawaststjerna, wrote:

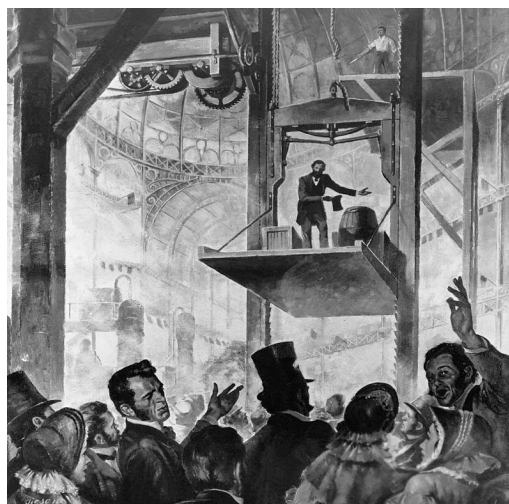
Even by Nordic standards, Sibelius responded with exceptional intensity to the moods of nature and the changes in the seasons: he scanned the skies with his binoculars for the geese flying over the lake ice, listened to the screech of the cranes, and heard the cries of the curlew echo over the marshy grounds just below Ainola.³ He savoured the spring blossoms every bit as much as he did autumnal scents and colours.

I think you can appreciate this love of Finland's scenery and wild life in *Finlandia* as you listen. Near the end of *Finlandia* is a hymn-like section.⁴ Sibelius later reworked that part into a choral piece which has become a sort of unofficial Finnish national anthem. It is also found in many hymn books as the tune for either "We rest on Thee" by the American hymn-writer Edith Gilling Cherry (1827-1897) or "Be still my soul" a translation of a German hymn by Kathrina von Schlegel (b.1697). These are both lovely hymns and suit the tune well. Find one of them in your own hymn book and sing it today.

A story from science history

Do you enjoy going in a lift and being whisked up or down several floors of a tall building? If you do you may have noticed the word OTIS on the lift. When you see that word you can be confident that even if the cable on which the lift operates were to break, the lift will not fall.

American mechanic Elisha Graves Otis (1811-1861) was self-taught. He was responsible for a number of interesting inventions but the one for which he is most famous is the safety elevator (we call them safety "lifts" in Britain). To ensure that a broken cable would not cause an accident he designed an arrangement of spring-operated clamps that would grip onto the guide rails of the lift and halt it if the tension from the hoist rope was removed.



On 20th September 1853, Otis sold his first safety elevator equipment but sales were slow. He decided to give a demonstration that would convince the public and drum up custom. He decided to exhibit his elevator at the New York World Fair. In front of a crowd at the fair, Otis had himself hoisted high in the air on a platform fitted with his safety feature. Then, as the excited audience watched he called for the rope to be cut. Instead of plunging to the ground his safety mechanism halted the lift in mid air. You can see this dramatic moment in the picture. The success of his device was secured after such a thrilling demonstration!

Today's Optional Resources files include instructions for making your own model lift out of cardboard. Sadly, it does not incorporate Otis's device so any of your toy figures that travel in it should be warned!

3 Sibelius' family home.

4 At 6 minutes 10 seconds in the recording here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F5zg_af9b8c