



Hidden Treasure

The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field.

Matthew 13:44

January - February, 2026

Between holidays...

Last time I wrote to you, the Christmas cum winter vacation was just over and as I write to you now, we are already preparing for the summer one!

Here bookings for trains open 2 months before the date of travel and often sell out the day they become available (especially for the holiday seasons) so we have to be thinking and planning holidays at least two months ahead of time.

In the beginning of May, Arpita has a 12-day vacation. Videeta finishes her internship on May 31 so, as usual, their vacations do not correspond. With this being the end of Videe's 5.5 years in Tamil Nadu, we are planning to take the opportunity to visit one of the five former French colonies in India which happens to be close enough for Videe to come for a day – and, we think, a lovely way for her to spend one of her 25 days of leave for the year!

But, I can assure you, plenty happens between holidays too!

Here are some of the highlights for me:

- The friends who picked us up to bring us to our new home now have a beautiful baby girl! With both of their families inter-state, we have the privilege of being the local "grandparents"!*



Photos: "Anna" with her parents and "grandparents".

- We had a 3-day retreat for the leaders of our group and their wives in our home-town, the purpose of which was to build a greater sense of team, develop a common sense of where we want to go together, and brainstorm ideas of how we might be able to make progress in that direction.*

- One of the outcomes of the retreat was a commitment by the ladies to pray frequently for ourselves, each other and our husbands. To begin with, we have been using Titus 2:3-5 as a guide. In that passage of Scripture, Paul is telling Titus what to teach the people of his church. We have begun with the matters Paul instructed Titus to have the older women train the younger women in, reasoning that if we are to train others, then we are certainly expected to practice them also. Each week, we are taking just one aspect to focus on. While the list itself may not look very inspiring, we have found that behind each word (or phrase) is a wonderfully rich idea. Let me offer you one example:*

Depending on which English translation you use, item 5 on the list may be "domestic", "homemakers", "busy at home", "working in their homes", "good housekeepers" or something similar. Not many women would find that exciting or inspiring and many would probably resent being taught that but consider this...

While English requires a phrase, in Greek this is a single word. It is a compound word combining two nouns: one that means "house" with one that means "ware". A "ware" is a guard, a keeper of something, someone who is aware, watchful, attentive, taking care of and looking out for something.

In early Israelite history, men over twenty were conscripted to the army. When the nation was at war, it was very literally the women who were keeping and guarding their houses. Likewise, when all the men went, as required, to Jerusalem three times a year, it was very literally the women who were keeping and guarding their houses but God made it known that it was him who was ultimately protecting them (see Exodus 34:22-24). Far from relegating women to menial work, this reaffirms a very important and strategic responsibility - to be charged with defending, protecting, guarding and keeping the home, is no small, insignificant or inferior responsibility. And it speaks of partnership

This is a letter for our family and friends. Please do not publish, post or share this document or content from it in any form of media including the internet.

with God, partnership with their husbands and a real and significant contribution to the nation. While “house keeper” is actually a very good, literal translation, the connotations of that term in English means that it fails miserably to convey the actual sense of the word in Greek, and it misses the rich and important cultural background.

- In addition to the daily personal prayer for ourselves and each other, the ladies have decided to meet together once a month to pray specifically, and collectively, for our church.
- Our little group continues to study James together. It is a delightful, challenging (confronting) and very practical letter! I am really enjoying (and benefiting from) listening to Avinash preach in English. It has been years since I have had regular Bible teaching in English and it makes such a difference!
- We had the first of our “Special Sunday” extended services. On the 4th or final Sunday of each month we are planning to have an extended service, concluded by a fellowship lunch. After a slightly abbreviate “regular” service, there is a prolonged teaching time that is more workshop-like than the regular “preaching” format. For our first “Special Sunday” Avinash led the group through a study of Romans 1:1-2:5, to establish “What is the Gospel?” For many people, it brought much greater clarity to what that often-heard-but-little-understood word means (and does not mean).

God is the righteous ruler of his creation	Humanity has rebelled against the righteous rule of its creator and is unrighteous
God's righteous response to the unrighteousness and rebellion of humanity is judgement of unrighteousness and the provision of righteousness by faith	The right response of humanity is repentance and obedience that comes from faith

Image: Our Gospel outline from Romans 1:1-2:5

- Along with three young women, I have completed my SOAP-style reading of James and we have begun working our way through the marriage preparation curriculum. We’ve had a number of great conversations so far about practical, life-implications of the teachings of the Bible, specifically our God-given identity and God-given purpose.
- Having SOAP-styled my way through James, I’m now trying to read through it in the language of my state and family. One of the women from my group has agreed to help me by reading (recording) small sections for me to listen to. She’s also a form of accountability for me

because I’m sending to her a photo and recording of what I’ve done each day.

- For one woman, the SOAP-style reading was quite difficult and she thought a more guided or directed study with specific questions for her to respond to would be better for her, so that has led to the forming of a weekly Bible study group. It’s fun seeing how things evolve!
- I been having fun making word puzzles and activity sheets related to the passages we’re studying. That’s another thing that’s evolved. Though initially, I had the kids in mind, there are a number of women who are enjoying them too!
- I am continuing to work through my keyboard lessons, currently up to lesson 34/45. Last lesson I was encouraged to begin working on a musical repertoire. I opted for an aspirational repertoire. These are not pieces I can pull out and smoothly or confidently play, but they are pieces that I would like to practice more once I’ve completed the lessons, and pieces that I have found useful for developing various skills.

Piece	Source	Page	Notes
1. Amazing Grace	Sheet		G-G (with middle C)
2. Silent Night	Sheet		Thumb on Middle C
3. Gode tell them the mountain	Sheet		Swing, C Major Scale
4. Tell			Scale
5. Piece			
6. Two			
7. Joy			
8. Joy			
9. Joy			
10. Joy			
11. Joy			
12. Joy			
13. Joy			
14. Joy			
15. Joy			
16. Joy			
17. Joy			
18. Joy			
19. Joy			
20. Joy			

Piece	Source	Page	Notes
1. Hanon's Acrobatics	Course 1 & 2	78, 79	Right hand, left hand, both hands
2. Scales & Chords	Course 100 + 106	87	Contrary motion, G F G7, Parallel " G C D7
3. Scales & Chords	Course 112 + 115		
4. F			
5. A			
6. D			
7. Ode to Joy	Course pp B	30	C Position
8. Jesus saves (Huge Bull)	Course	75	G-G (with middle C)
9. Happy Birthday	Course	77	C Position
10. Standing in the need	Course	85	C Position + 1 4
11. Kum-ba-yah	Course	95	Key of C - C - C (extended 2)
12. Lullaby	Course	103	C Major Scale
13. Joy to the World	Course	107	C Major Scale
14. Blues - Got those blues	Course	108	C Blues Progression
15. Chasing the blues away	Course	109	G Major Scale
16. Blues for Winston Mandela	Course	116	G Major Scale
17. Why am I blue?	Course	117	G Blues Scale (Call + Response)
18. Good people	Course		
19. Good people	Course		
20. Good people	Course		

Images: My aspirational “Keyboard Repertoire”

- A couple of children have been coming each week for a Bible study and discussion about some matters they have identified as being particularly relevant in their season of life – friendships, relationships with their parents, managing an increasing workload at school, and responding well to the different pressures of demands they feel from the various directions.
- One young man has also been coming once a week for Bible study.

I’m so thankful for the many opportunities I have to study God’s word, learn with others, encourage and be encouraged, pray with others and be prayed for. We are thankful for each of you too. Thank you for your love and interest in our lives. We also love hearing from you!

With much love, Natalie & Avinash

This is a letter for our family and friends. Please do not publish, post or share this document or content from it in any form of media including the internet.