

# PORTRAITS OF **PROMISE**



# “God is Keeping Us”

A FAMILY OF FAITH

by Ellery Sadler, staff writer

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When serving others, we often assume we’re bestowing a gift on them.

However, the opposite can be equally true. The greatest blessing we experience is the kingdom joy of giving. It’s God’s delight to invite us into experiencing that joy with Him.

Yusufu’s family is one such example. While encouraging them, we have been immensely blessed by the encouragement of lives full of faith, courage and joy amid suffering.

We hope you, our Givers, are equally blessed by this story.

**These are the stories.  
These are the souls.  
These are the portraits of the  
lives we’re changing.**





## A FATHER'S PROVISION

“God is keeping us.”

This is the answer that Yusufu’s mother gives whenever someone asks how their family is doing.

**“We are fine,” she says.  
“God is keeping us.”**

When you meet this family, you would never know they hadn’t eaten in days. There are four children, including Yusufu, who is a 6-year-old with a deep voice and a wide smile. Genuine joy and peace is so present in their home you can feel it. Staff members from the partner we work with in this community talk

about how encouraged they’ve been simply from being around Yusufu and his family. “His family has even helped us to learn to have hope in hopeless situations,” they say.

God is keeping us. This radical level of trust in their heavenly Father is born of both faith and necessity for Yusufu’s family. Living in rural Malawi without many things we would consider necessities, they often had nowhere else to turn but to God for their daily provision. Yusufu’s father was employed, and his mother picked up part-time work whenever she could in order to

make ends meet. Still, far too often their four children would go hungry. They lived with the hope that one day things would be better.

Already struggling, the family was dealt another blow. Yusufu's father frequently complained of intense stomach pain. The family kept traveling from hospital to hospital but could not get any answers. The pain grew so bad, Yusufu's father had to stop working. His mother managed to find odd jobs, which barely provided enough food to survive; the situation was precarious with four hungry little bellies to fill every day.

Finally, the doctors at one hospital thought Yusufu's father had a tumor in his stomach. Tests were done, but no official diagnosis was made, so Yusufu's father continued to live in pain, sometimes visiting the hospital more than once a week for additional testing. His condition worsened to the point where his wife was no longer able to leave the home and look for work. After two years, Yusufu's father was finally diagnosed with advanced stomach cancer. "Stay home," he was told.

**When you meet this family, you would never know they hadn't eaten in days.**



**“There is nothing we can do for you.”**

The family was devastated both by this news and by the desperate lack of food and other necessities in their home. They weren't sure how to go on. Thankfully, even in the midst of fear and pain, their Father was keeping them.



**The World Bank estimates that Malawi remains one of the poorest countries in the world, with the national poverty rate at approximately 50%. There is a widespread lack of access to social safety net programs, which increases the risk for vulnerable families like Yusufu's. The COVID-19 pandemic has only made economic and employment opportunities worse.<sup>1</sup>**

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/malawi/overview#1>



*Thank You for Your*  
**FAITHFULNESS**

HAPPY THANKSGIVING

*from*



orphan'spromise



## HOLISTIC HOPE

It was our privilege, through Life Child—our partner in Malawi—to walk alongside Yusufu’s family during this difficult time. We’ve been able to deliver food and offer spiritual support and encouragement. In turn, we have been vastly encouraged by the deep faith of this beautiful family. Life Child operates Moyo Preschool to provide educational support to children as well as holistic services to their families and communities. Their services have four focus areas: Education Support, Social Support, Health and Nutrition Support, and Spiritual Support.

For Yusufu, this means he is able to get a preschool education, which his parents would never have been able to afford. There are





no free government preschools in the rural area that they call home. Why is this so important? The formative preschool years are critical to a child's educational development. This is even more true in Malawi, a nation in southeastern Africa where the average teacher-pupil ratio is about 1 to 73.<sup>2</sup> Obviously, this is not an advantageous learning environment for a child who has never attended preschool and is learning for the first time. Children who lack educational support can end up falling even further behind their peers and must struggle to catch up. We've heard testimony after testimony of how well children who were part of Life Child are performing in primary school compared to others who have not had the chance to attend preschool. Such an early learning opportunity may seem small, but it can have significant impact on the trajectory of a child's education.

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.iiep.unesco.org/en/packed-classrooms-reality-educational-planners-malawi-13351>

Since Yusufu joined Moyo Preschool, we have been able to watch in real time as his life has been transformed socially, physically, mentally, and spiritually. You can't meet Yusufu without being greeted by his contagious smile. To his fellow students and teachers, he is a constant reminder of being thankful and rejoicing every day despite our earthly circumstances. He has also been excelling in his school assignments, which his mother says is a relief.

"I was so worried about the education of my children," she says. "But I thank God that you came to our rescue." Every mother deserves to know her child has the opportunities they need to reach their full potential. Yusufu's mother also mentioned that she appreciates the love the children are shown at school. Having a safe, caring environment for her children to learn, play with friends, and grow spiritually is a huge weight off her shoulders as she continues to act as the primary caregiver for her husband.

The situation is still stressful for the family. While the donated food helps them to survive, the family needs continual support as Yusufu's

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**Let me hold the door for you. I may have never walked in your shoes, but I can see your soles are worn, your strength is torn under the weight of a story I have never lived before.**

- Morgan Harper Nichols

mother is still unable to work while managing her husband's cancer. They ask for your prayers. Yusufu's mother shared tearfully: "The point we are at now, we don't have any knowledge of what we can do. All we are asking for is your prayers for our family."

Serving Yusufu and his family as they walk through the challenges of sickness and suffering is the highest honor. As poet Morgan Harper Nichols says: "Let me hold the door for you. I may have never walked in your shoes, but I can see your soles are worn, your strength is torn under the weight of a story I have never lived before. Let me hold the door for you. After all you've walked through, it's the least I can do."

What a privilege to "hold the door" for families like Yusufu's that have experienced the weight of a story we will never fully know. To stand with them. To offer support. To serve and to love. After all they have walked through, it is the least we can do on behalf of their heavenly Father who is keeping them.





give us a call: 1-800-818-4016

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