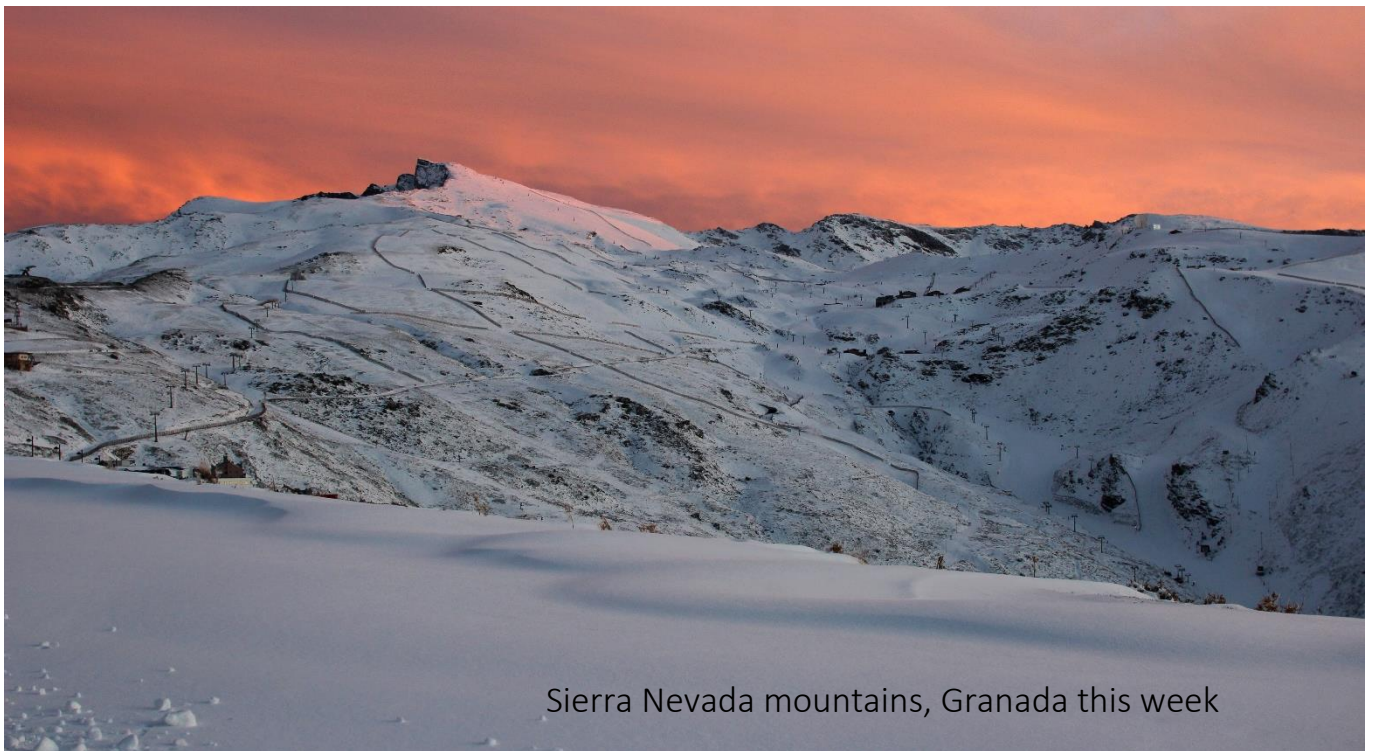


# thewhitesinspain

December 2017

Dear St James,

The past 2 months have been the hardest we have been through in 6 years in Spain. Just as we were about to launch bi-monthly gatherings in our house and felt that a few people were getting close to making a commitment everything seemed to fall apart at once. Some of the stress of 6 years cross-cultural living with a young family and son with Down Syndrome caught up with Liz who was really unwell, our car kept breaking down (which due to our location and having two small boys is very challenging) and because of all this the boys were very unsettled. It has been a time to stop, rest and regroup; to look at how we do life, allow space for God to bring healing and restoration and to allow ourselves time to think just about us as a family. Dave & Kellie have been amazing and looked after all the practical side of the ministry so we could focus on the boys, ourselves and our marriage.



Sierra Nevada mountains, Granada this week

## Time to Heal

We had just been reading through Joshua in our morning worship times and had just read Joshua 5. Israel have crossed the Jordan, their enemies are scared and they are ready to take hold of their inheritance. God says, 'Stop' I want you to circumcise yourselves and wait until you have healed! This makes no sense in our minds, 40 years waiting to take the land and at the point their dreams are about to be fulfilled God says 'wait!' Yet God is committed that their hearts are prepared for the next stage. Everything practical is in place but they are bringing their past into their future. In verse 9 it says<sup>9</sup> Then the LORD said to Joshua, "Today I have rolled away the reproach of Egypt from you." God took away all their hurts, disappointments, baggage, wrong thoughts and fears - everything they had known, been and used to 'survive'. They were now entering a whole new dimension, a new reality, way of being and God needed to do some heart surgery to get them ready. We feel this is a word for us in this season. God does not need to rush, His timing is perfect, who we are is always more important than what we do! We want to be free, healed, the best possible 'us' we can be. We don't want to fake it or struggle through because we know what our inheritance is, a whole new Kingdom where Heaven comes close and we can be everything God dreamed of when He created us, without who we were limiting or holding us back.

## Emmanuel

Isn't this the message of Christmas? That the Creator of the Universe came close, gave us the ultimate Christmas present, Emmanuel – 'God with us'!! To lead us out of hopelessness, pain, religion, striving, sin and death; and to show us in person what love, connection and intimacy look like, what His Kingdom and reality look like, what real life looks like. As we focus ourselves on Jesus in the lead up to Christmas let's let Holy Spirit show us areas in our lives where we still have traces of Egypt left over. We pray that you will know the love, reality, power and presence of Emmanuel, 'God with You' this Christmas and in 2018!

## Christmas Family Church

On Saturday we had our Christmas family church. Since September we have been having gatherings bi-weekly with a growing core of people coming along. This was our special Christmas celebration with lots of fun, worship/carols, a talk about the meaning of Christmas and crafts for the kids and adults to do together. Our heart has always been to make church something that is done in family as this concept really doesn't exist in Spain. We had around 25 adults and children, half the number we were expecting but we are learning that the Spanish culture is not to commit to anything until the last moment. We know every time God brings the right people and there is a wider community of 50+ people who have come at some point and with whom we have been able to spend time with and share something of God's love and reality.



## Mixing the dough

Last letter I was reflecting on the parable of the yeast, how the yeast was mixed until it worked through the whole dough. Over the past 2 months there has been lots of mixing as we share life with our friends, visitors have come and met some of them and been able to invest in their lives too. We love this Kingdom synergy and want to continue this in 2018. In September I took a team of my Jehovah's Witness football friends to play in and Ambassadors football tournament! We were the only non-Christians there and they couldn't believe that a team of JW's would come. My friends loved it and every week ask me when we can do it again! There are others stories I could tell of encounters where God has brought people across our paths and they have just opened their hearts with any prompting. Its exciting as well as challenging as some of these people are coming from very dark places and we are aware if the battle for their lives. Please pray for protection, wisdom and ears to listen to Holy Spirit whispers.



At the end of November we made a 1200km round trip up to Valencia for the wedding of one of our neighbours from Puzol, the town where we lived for 5 years. They are not believers yet but very special friends and it was so good to celebrate with them. It was a good time meeting up with old friends and neighbours from our lives there. I preached in the Puzol church on the Sunday which was really nice to catch up with everyone and to see how God is working there and bringing in new families. Our car broke 1 hour away from Valencia so we arrived in style in a taxi and breakdown truck! My friend Paco (the one whom some of you helped start a

repair workshop in his garage) was able to repair it the next day which was amazing and meant we weren't delayed getting back to Granada.

We just want to take this opportunity to thank you all for your ongoing support and interest in what God is doing in Spain. We don't know what 2018 will look like but we know it will be good. God's heart burns for Spain and we want to be here to be available in anyway that is useful to Him. In November Liz attended a conference in Manchester which was gathering church planters from across Europe with a heart to explore new ways for living and being Church. She was the only representative from Spain but there were several prophetic words given about this being the 'time for Spain'. We say yes and amen to this, we love this country and the amazing people who live here and long for them to know Jesus as a present, intimate and life-changing Savior.

Liz loved seeing you all in November and seeing how your family has grown. We also really enjoyed Tom, Helen, Beniah and Joe coming to visit during half-term and showing them something of our lives here. We would love to see more of you come and visit in 2018!

Thank you so much for believing in us and joining us on the journey,

Love Chris, Liz, Leo & Samuel

