

A LENTEN DEVOTIONAL SERIES



THE SACRIFICE THAT SETS US FREE

**NORTHGATE**  
church

## INTRODUCTION

Does fear or doubt ever get in the way of your relationship with God?

When we have an incomplete picture of his character, and many of us do, we question things. . . like whether or not we're actually forgiven, reconciled, redeemed, or free. We wonder, "Where are you God?" and "Do you really love me?"

But Jesus came to show us what God the Father is like, what he does, and what it looks like to live in an ongoing, loving relationship with him.

*Every single word* Jesus spoke is significant.

So, in the following pages, we'll focus on the last seven statements of Jesus from the cross — some of his last words to us.

As we examine these powerful and purposeful statements, and other related passages, we'll gain a greater understanding of how much he loves us and how he is truly the sacrifice that sets us free.

These 40 days of reflection are a wonderful invitation to prepare your heart during the Lenten season. In addition to the readings, video and group discussion resources are available at the QR code below.

Special thanks to Mari Keisling, the architect and author of this study. Her sincere desire to get closer and closer to the heart of Jesus is contagious. The Northgate community, and beyond, are richly blessed by her gifts of research, contemplation, writing, and her vulnerability in sharing it all.



# FORGIVENESS

Father, forgive them,  
for they do not know what they are doing.



# FORGIVENESS

Sunday

*"Jesus said, 'Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.' And they divided up his clothes by casting lots."*

Luke 23:34

As Jesus hung on the cross, He prayed that God would forgive. People had no understanding of what they were doing. They couldn't see the bigger picture of what God was doing. As Jesus prayed, the Roman guards cast lots for His clothing. He wasn't the only one fulfilling prophecy on the cross.

Those who betrayed Him, yelled, "Crucify!" Those who arrested, beat, and nailed Him to the cross. Those who thought their eyes were wide open yet had no idea. Those whose sin required a sacrifice. This is who Jesus prays for; this is who Jesus asks His Father in heaven to forgive.

As much as the people should have known and recognized Jesus as the Messiah, the truth was they couldn't see past their own understanding and expectations. God knew, even though He pointed to Jesus as Messiah from the very beginning, that the people would not understand. Jesus knew what was coming, and He still came. It's why He came. It was the only way. And He was willing.

*Father God, thank you for your word that reveals truth so we can understand. Increase my desire to know and understand -- not for understanding sake, but so that it takes deep root in my heart. What do I not understand, or misunderstand, about who you are and what you've done? Give me eyes to see and ears to hear so I may turn and be forgiven.*



# FORGIVENESS

Monday

*"The people stood watching, and the rulers even sneered at him. They said, 'He saved others; let him save himself if he is God's Messiah, the Chosen One.'"*

Luke 23:35

The rulers of God's people sneered at Jesus while the people stood watching. They taunted Him, tempting Him to act; tempting Him to prove Himself. Jesus had already experienced this as the devil tempted Him in the wilderness. The people were behaving no differently. God had prepared Him for just this situation.

People sneer at God all the time. We think He's ineffective and incapable of doing what we think He should do. We want God to prove Himself to us, as if what He has already done is not enough. But our thinking often serves our own interests, not the interest of God's kingdom nor the greater good of the people of God. And not the greater good of those who are far from God.

Jesus learned obedience through suffering. No amount of taunting could dissuade Him from this one purpose of reconciling the world to God. Jesus wasn't on the cross to prove He could save Himself. He was on the cross to save us. And that's just what He did.

*Heavenly Father, Your plan for salvation is perfect in every way. Thank you, Jesus, for your obedience, your suffering, and your resolve to save and forgive. What needs of my own do I hold higher than the needs of others? Give me faith to be obedient as I trust that you will meet every need.*

# FORGIVENESS

Tuesday

*"But I tell you, love your enemies  
and pray for those who persecute you."*

Matthew 5:44

Jesus says to love those who mean you harm; those who push, provoke, and accuse. Those who tell lies about you, steal from you, and betray your trust. Those who, because of your faith, maliciously desire your downfall, even your death.

Jesus loves His enemies. This was a radical idea then, and it still is today. He doesn't just want those who persecute Him to change; He wants them to know Him, to come to Him, to receive forgiveness.

As Jesus prayed for those who persecuted Him, He was praying for us. We were once enemies of God. In our sin, we persecuted Christ by rebelling against His authority and denying His kingdom. As we follow His example, we pray for those who persecute Christ by persecuting His followers. We pray they would receive forgiveness so that they too may come to saving faith in Christ.

*Lord Jesus, You prayed for those who persecuted you,  
those who tried to rebuke and shame you, those who  
mocked and ridiculed you. You prayed for me as you  
carried my sin to the cross. Show me who I need to pray  
for and forgive as you have forgiven me. Give me the  
desire and faithfulness to live a life of forgiveness.*

# FORGIVENESS

Wednesday

*"Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, 'Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother or sister who sins against me? Up to seven times?' Jesus answered, 'I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times.'"*

Matthew 17:21-22

Peter thought he was being generous in forgiving seven times, maybe hoping Jesus would say that was too many. While Jesus often answers a question with a question, this time he answers straight away. Seventy-seven times. Exponentially more than Peter could have thought or imagined.

Sometimes we ask a question to understand what is true. Sometimes we ask a question to prove a point. Sometimes we ask a question looking for a loop-hole. We like to appear generous, but at some point want to know we are allowed to hold a grudge.

God's forgiveness is always available. We demonstrate our understanding of God's forgiveness for us when we generously forgive others. As soon as we acknowledge our sin, coming to Jesus with a sincere and contrite heart, God forgives. Every time. We should do the same.

*Heavenly Father, thank you for forgiving me. You are generous and kind in your love for me. Help me see your heart for those who hurt and wrong me as you see my heart for you. Is there any area where I believe I am justified in unforgiveness? Grow my understanding of all that I've been forgiven so that I may truly desire to forgive.*

# FORGIVENESS

Thursday

*“When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.”*

Matthew 9:36

Crowds of people followed Jesus everywhere He went. They hung on His every word. They were in need of help and encouragement. Jesus recognized their need for someone to teach and lead them in the true ways of God.

Those appointed to represent God thought they were creating helpful guidelines and boundaries. But as they focused more on the keeping of the law than the ways of God, they created legal burdens too great to bear. The people were helpless to carry them out and were called out on every failure.

Jesus is the Good Shepherd. He sees the true condition of our hearts and minds, and knows what we need. In His compassion He seeks, serves, loves, and protects all those who call on His name. In His compassion, He sets us free from the burden of the law and the power of sin. He leads us with grace and truth.

*Heavenly Father, You are all-knowing. We are prone to wander when we are uncertain, waver when we feel threatened, and wonder when we just don't know the way. Show me how your grace and truth overcomes every burden I face. Lead me in your good ways.*

# FORGIVENESS

Friday

*"My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have an advocate with the Father—Jesus Christ, the Righteous One."*

1 John 2:1

Jesus is our advocate. He goes before the Father on our behalf. The Apostle John says we should not sin, but if (when) we do, Jesus, the Righteous One is still asking His Father to forgive.

We might think that once saved there is no need to confess or repent. We are forgiven completely. Or we might think, if once saved, we need to be perfect and any sin will break our relationship with Jesus; that He will shake His finger at us and turn His back on us.

The forgiveness Jesus offers is never ending. There is no sin that cannot be forgiven when we truly put our trust in Jesus and His work on the cross. We confess and repent to reset our hearts and refocus minds on the One who helps us do what is good and right.

*Jesus, You are holy and righteous. Sin separates because we must turn away from you to carry it out. Where there is unconfessed sin in my life, give me strength to speak. Where there is unrepentance, soften my heart so that I will turn back and receive forgiveness in my relationship with you.*

# FORGIVENESS

Saturday

*"This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins."*

Matthew 26:28

During the last meal Jesus shares with His disciples, He establishes a new covenant, not made with the blood of animals, but with His own blood. His blood would literally be poured out. And the purpose is for the forgiveness of sins, not just for a few, but for many.

In the Old Testament, the old covenant, the blood of a blameless animal would be offered as a substitute sacrifice to atone for personal guilt. Each person brought their own animal for sacrifice at regularly scheduled times, over and over again. But not with Jesus. His blood and sacrifice covered not just those who were present, not just those who called for his crucifixion, or those who placed Him on the cross, but for every person who has or will ever live, for all time.

What the old covenant was unable to do, Jesus and the new covenant make complete: one sacrifice for all time for all people. God covenants with His people. When we do not hold up our end of the relationship, God always does. As we participate in communion, we remember the sacrifice of Jesus and the faithfulness of God. We can turn to Him, trusting His sacrifice offers true and complete forgiveness.

*Jesus, You are faithful and true. You willingly went to the cross so I could be forgiven. Thank you for the reminder communion gives of your body and blood given for me. Your forgiveness covers every sin. Is there any sin in my life that I've kept hidden, tucked away, not believing you will forgive? Today, I lay it at your feet.*



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# ASSURANCE

Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise.



## ASSURANCE

Sunday

*"And he said to him, 'Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise.'"*

Luke 23:43

We do not know the accusations leveled at the two criminals crucified with Jesus. We do know that this form of execution was reserved for the worst offenders. Jesus does not hold the repentant man's crimes against Him. Instead, He tells him he will be with Jesus forever.

People have a hard time grasping the idea that they can be certain of eternal life with Christ. How could God forgive me if I can't even forgive myself? How do I know that I'm really good enough and haven't messed up again in a worse way? Is it too late for me?

As long as it is today, you can be certain about life with God for all eternity. If you want this, you can be certain that God wants it for you. The Holy Spirit is waiting for you to say "yes" to trusting Jesus as Lord and Savior. Today, you can know you will be with Jesus in paradise.

*Heavenly Father, why do we make this so hard? Why do we doubt, question, and shake our heads? Your yoke is easy and your burden is light. You are the Messiah, the Risen Christ. I want to accept and believe that your forgiveness is for me. Help me in my unbelief.*

## ASSURANCE

Monday

*"But the other rebuked him, saying, 'Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? And we indeed justly, for we are receiving the due reward of our deeds; but this man has done nothing wrong.'"*

Luke 23:40-41

While both criminals start out berating Jesus, at some point, one of them has a change of heart. Has his life just flashed before his eyes? Does he imagine having to give an account to God? Have the words of forgiveness spoken by Jesus on behalf of His accusers and executioners pierced his soul?

As we come alongside Jesus, the contrast between our sin and His innocence becomes glaringly clear. We may even recognize that death is the consequence our sin deserves. What may not seem so clear is that before our physical death, spiritual death is already in process: separation from God's presence, love, and peace.

As the criminal sees Jesus clearly, is the cross he is nailed to the only thing keeping him from falling on his knees at the feet of the suffering Christ? The love and peace found in the presence of God is available now through the forgiveness and assurance of faith in Jesus. We find it at the feet of Jesus.

*Father God, I am a sinner saved by grace. What keeps me from falling on my knees? Where I am afraid, I trust you to protect and provide. Where I am rebellious, I come under your authority. Where I am prideful, I bow in humble gratitude. Thank you for your sacrifice so that I may have life with you.*

## ASSURANCE

Tuesday

*"And if I go and prepare a place for you,  
I will come again and will take you to myself,  
that where I am you may be also."*

John 14:3

Jesus goes with a purpose to prepare. He promises to return one day to take with Him those who believe. He will take us to himself. We are with Christ spiritually; one day we will be with Christ physically. We will live for all eternity in the fullness of His presence.

The image of a groom with his bride mirrors that of Jesus with His church. The groom, once betrothed, would go to prepare the place where he and his bride would live. He would most often add a room to his father's house. He would then return for their wedding to bring his bride to their new home.

Jesus says that His church is His bride. He will come back to get each person who has pledged their life to Him; each person who trusts in Him for their salvation. One day we will dwell in the presence of God. Jesus is not slow in keeping His promises. He keeps and fulfills each one at just the right time.

*Faithful Jesus, Your gift of forgiveness makes a way for us  
to be with you. We can trust your promise to not only  
return, but take us, those who believe, to be with you for  
all eternity. What holds me back from wanting to be  
where you are? May I let it go and hold tight to you.*

## ASSURANCE

Wednesday

*"Therefore he is able to save completely  
those who come to God through him,  
because he always lives to intercede for them."*

Hebrews 7:25

Jesus lives. He is able (and willing) to save all who come to God through Him. No one is turned away. What He does is complete. It is all that is needed. Jesus lives to pray for and save those who come to Him.

Everyone who calls on God through Jesus, who reaches out to Him with the slightest hope, faith the size of a mustard seed, and puts their trust in Jesus is heard and answered. No sin is too big or bad to bring to Jesus. No life is too far gone. When we trust and believe Jesus, we can know without a doubt that we are saved.

Have you put your trust in Jesus? If you have, thank Him for His thorough work on the cross. If you haven't, what doubts or questions keep you from believing? He already knows so there is no reason to hide or fear. Nothing will surprise Him. Jesus is alive and He is for you. So come.

*Jesus, You are the perfect high priest.  
Your life and death satisfied every requirement, every  
barrier to a fully reconciled life with God. You hear my  
every word and know my every thought. Reveal those  
deep places that keep me at a distance so that  
I can live a life that trusts you fully.*



## ASSURANCE

Thursday

*"Then I said, 'Here I am - it is written about me in the scroll - I have come to do your will, my God.' And by that will, we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all."*

Hebrews 10:7,10

The author of Hebrews quotes passages from the Old Testament, all of which point to the coming Jesus. Jesus did many things while He was alive on earth; everything according to God's will. God's will was that people would be made holy through the sacrifice of Jesus. One sacrifice for all people for all time.

Jesus knew His purpose, and nothing in it accomplished anything for Himself. As God Himself, Jesus was already holy and complete, one with the Father and the Spirit. He was the only one worthy to accomplish God's will.

At one time, only the chosen high priest could enter the most holy place, and then only once a year. Jesus was the perfect high priest, and when the curtain in the temple was torn from top to bottom, He became the last one ever needed. While the need for holiness did not cease, the perfect blood and sacrifice of Jesus makes holy everyone who comes to him and believes.

*Jesus, you are worthy of all praise and honor. You are holy and make holy all who come to you in faith. Reassure me when I feel unworthy to meet with you. When I want to work and strive, remind me that you have done all that was needed. In you, I am free to come.*

## ASSURANCE

Friday

*"For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast."*

Ephesians 2:8-9

By the grace of God we are saved when we believe and trust Jesus through faith. There is nothing we can do to earn it. It's not in our own effort - the amount, level, or quality of our work. We can take no credit. If we boast, it must be in the grace of God.

Humility sounds good, but it's extremely challenging once our desire is to be truly humble. Instinct often kicks in and we even start to boast about our humility because there is this constant need to prove ourselves. We want to be seen, heard, and valued.

God sees you, hears you, and says you are valuable. So valuable that He has given you a gift you desperately need: grace. Grace to rest. No more striving. No more proving. Secure in the sacrifice of Jesus. Secure in the everlasting love of God.

*Heavenly Father, thank you for your gift of grace. May I not take this gift for granted but rather rejoice with you as you share it with others through me. Show me who around me needs to know your grace. Who needs to know this rest? Give me the words and make a way for me to boast only always in you.*

## ASSURANCE

Saturday

*"In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory."*

Ephesians 1:13-14

God guarantees the work of Jesus on the cross. The Holy Spirit, one with God and Jesus, marks believers with God's seal. We are His as soon as we hear and believe the truth of God's word and the good news of His salvation.

The questions we ask aren't, "Did it work? Was my prayer sincere? Did I do it right?" The questions should be, "Do I believe God about Jesus? That He did what He said He did; that it was enough? Is my heart sincere in trusting the work of Jesus?"

This is no "money back" guarantee made by God because the work of Jesus is certain. There is an inheritance of eternal life, perfect peace, and unending rest waiting for weary souls. The Father, Son, and Spirit work in perfect unity to keep us securely in His love.

*Heavenly Father, You have snatched from the enemy each person who believes and trusts in the gospel of your salvation. You have given us access to this inheritance that waits for us through the power of Your Spirit living within us. You are mine and I am yours, all to the praise of your glory.*

[illegible]

# RECONCILED

Woman, here is your son.

*And to the disciple*

Here is your mother.



## RECONCILED

Sunday

*"When Jesus saw his mother there, and the disciple he loved standing nearby, he said to her, 'Woman, here is your son,' and to the disciple, 'Here is your mother.' From that time on, this disciple took her into his home."*

John 19:26-27

As Jesus hung on the cross he saw his mother. He saw his disciple, John. He thought of them and their future. He made sure they both understood this new relationship He was creating. And they once again responded in obedience even as their Messiah was dying before them.

Mary, the mother of Jesus, and John, his disciple, were two of only a few in his circle who were near the cross when Jesus was crucified. Mary was a widow and Jesus, hanging on the cross made provisions for her by placing her in the care of one of his most trusted followers. From that day on, John assumed the role of son to Mary and she would treat him as his own.

From the cross, Jesus instituted a new family. Mary had other sons and John's mother was still alive, and yet, Jesus bypassed the physical bloodline with a new spiritual family tree. He honored His mother and John by entrusting them to one another's care.

*Heavenly Father, you are the perfect father caring for each of your children. You provide a network of people, friends as close as family, who know you, love you, and respond to you in faith. Show me how to honor them as I honor you with each relationship you've entrusted to my care.*



## RECONCILED

Monday

*"Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God - children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God."*

John 1:12-13

Faith in Jesus gives us the right to become children of God. It's not because of our family of origin. It's not that we simply choose it or that we are forced in some way to comply. But by God's will, He gives us faith to believe and be born of His Spirit, born into His family.

Jesus was conceived by a virgin through the power of the Holy Spirit. And while this event brought about the physical birth of God the Son, in the same way we are born spiritually through the power of the Holy Spirit. We also can become sons and daughters of God.

While every person is made in the image of God, uniquely designed and knit together by God Himself, only those who believe God about His Son Jesus have the right to be His children. Jesus gave His life so the whole world, including you, could believe and know God as Father.

*Sovereign God, You are a good, good Father.  
What fears or concerns keep me at a distance from your embrace as Father? Show me the ways I misunderstand your love and goodness so I can know Your Spirit within me and cry out to you, "Abba, Father."*

## RECONCILED

Tuesday

*"Pointing to his disciples, (Jesus) said, 'Here are my mother and my brothers. For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother.'"*

Matthew 12:49-50

Jesus calls family those who follow and trust in him. In Christ, we become children of God and thus brothers and sisters as the family of Jesus. Anyone who knowingly and genuinely, not unwittingly, does the will of God is family.

Jesus began teaching about this new view of relationships well before the cross. While Jesus doesn't diminish or discount our families of origin, He includes all believers in a new family found with Him at the center. People from all walks of life are now related by His blood.

Jesus makes it clear that we are not just to care about, acknowledge, or respond to those in our earthly lineage. We look out for, reach out to, and walk with those who walk with Jesus. He has made each church service, social gathering, small group, or ministry project a family event.

*Lord Jesus, thank you for giving us a new way to see and consider family. It's only through our relationship with you that we can know this family you created and invite us to join. Heal my broken places from troubled and broken relationships. As I draw close to you, teach me what it means to draw close to your church.*

## RECONCILED

Wednesday

*"Greater love has no one but this: to lay down one's life for one's friends. You are my friends if you do as I command."*

John 15:13-14

Great love is shown through great sacrifice. No greater sacrifice exists than to lay down your life for another. Friendship is a relationship of choice. Following the commands of Jesus is how friendship with Him is displayed.

Jesus laid down his life not just for those who were considered friends at the time, but for every enemy of God, offering them His friendship as well. In doing so, He elevated friendships of faith to the highest level. People who have nothing in common but Him, willingly sacrificing for one another in His name, demonstrate His great love.

Jesus is God, and He is also our friend. He is incomprehensible, while at the same time, intimately knowable. Jesus commands us to love one another as He has loved us. We are truly His friends if we do what He says.

*Jesus, you are the friend who is closer than a brother. You honor friendship and call us to do the same. What keeps me from being a good friend to others, as you've been the best friend to me? Make it the desire of my heart to love others well in Your name.*

## RECONCILED

Thursday

*"So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ this way, we do so no longer."*

2 Corinthians 5:16

At one time, people saw and considered each other from a worldly point of view, even Christ. But now, we not only view and understand Christ from a spiritual perspective, we view all people, believers and unbelievers alike, from this same perspective.

Humanity is more than the sum of our experiences and understanding. Scripture says that man looks on the outward appearances of others, but God looks at the heart. Jesus sees into the heart of every person he heals and sets free holding none of their sins, shortcomings, or misunderstandings against them.

God created each person with dignity and respect. He is in awe of and delights in His creation. Jesus, through His sacrifice, broke down the barrier between God and man. God broke down the barrier so that we no longer had to compete, compare, and come up against one another, but could walk with one another straight into the throne room of God.

*Heavenly Father, You are gracious and compassionate, rich in love. What does it mean to truly look past our brokenness in this fallen world and see one another through your eyes of grace, compassion, and love? Your Son Jesus has made it possible for us to see clearly who we were created to be living in relationship with you and one another.*

## RECONCILED

Friday

*"We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard,  
so that you also may have fellowship with us.  
And our fellowship is with the Father  
and with his Son, Jesus Christ."*

1 John 1:3

Fellowship with Jesus is an open invitation. As we talk openly about Christ, sharing His truth and our experience, we invite others into life with Him. We don't just befriend people. We invite them to be with us in relationship with God the Father and His Son.

Just as every word of God, every word Jesus spoke, has purpose, so do our words ... or at least they can. There are no more important words than those that tell of Jesus. And there are no more important actions than those that demonstrate His love.

John goes on to write that this fellowship with Jesus is lived in His light. It is fully seen, not hidden or tucked away, but visible so that others may know the joy of a restored and reconciled relationship with Him and one another. In humility, we gladly tell others of all Jesus has and continues to do. He is at the center of all we do and say.

*Lord Jesus, You are light. We do not shine our own light,  
but let your light shine through us. It's so easy to put up  
walls and hide not only ourselves, but our relationship  
with you. Give me a willing heart to speak your words in  
obedience to your Spirit within me. Help me be your  
ambassador of reconciliation.*

## RECONCILED

Saturday

*"I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one - I in them and you in me - so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me."*

John 17:22-23

Jesus has given us all we need to be unified with Him and His Father. He has given us all we need to be unified with one another. It is this unity, not following rules, but obeying the Spirit within us, that shows the world that God loves them the same as He loves His own Son.

Jesus is the good and perfect older brother. He knows His Father's love is more than enough for every person who has ever lived. His love can overcome every disagreement, every differing point of view, every trial, tribulation and trouble if only His children would seek Him first in their decisions and relationships.

Jesus is present in the heart of every believer. When two or more are gathered in His name, He is also there. It was the prayer of Jesus on the night He was betrayed, one of His last requests, that we would acknowledge the truth of who He is and be unified with Him in His love.

*Father God, You are restoring and reconciling all things to Yourself. Is the prayer of Jesus truly my prayer as well? Am I unified with Christ in my desire to be unified, one in heart and mind and spirit, with You and all people who call on Your name? Grow me, stretch me, challenge my understanding of what it means to be one with you.*



## This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

# REDEMPTION

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?



## REDEMPTION

Sunday

*"My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?  
Why are you so far from saving me,  
so far from my cries of anguish?"*  
Psalm 22:1

Jesus on the cross speaks the words penned by David one thousand years before. Did Jesus believe God had truly forsaken Him? Or, even in this moment of suffering, did Jesus speak words on purpose to point us to the Father?

As Jesus, a sinless man, hung on the cross, the sin of the world was heavy on His shoulders. The despair sin brings can cause us to question God. Does He know? Does He even care? We find our answer in verse 24 of the same Psalm. "For He has not despised or scorned the suffering of the afflicted one; He has not hidden His face from him but has listened to his cry for help."

Regardless of the anguish we experience in our lives brought on by our own sin, the sin of others, or simply as a result of living in a fallen and broken world, we can call out to God in our time of need and be certain that He hears our cry for help. He is as close as our next breath.

*Heavenly Father, thank you for hearing my cries for help.  
Is there anything in my life that I have kept tucked away,  
where I have not called out for help? As you bring it to  
mind, I lay it at your feet. Save me from my anguish.*

## REDEMPTION

Monday

*"When some of those standing there heard this, they said, 'He's calling for Elijah.'"*

Matthew 27:47

As people heard Jesus call out, they thought He was calling on someone other than God to rescue him. There was an expectation that Elijah would return to save the people from their trouble. Since they didn't recognize John the Baptist as the one to prepare the way for Jesus as Messiah, they assumed Elijah was still to come. And if Elijah hadn't come, Jesus couldn't be the Messiah.

We can be so certain that we know and understand what Scripture means and how it will play out and be fulfilled that we miss what God is teaching us in the moment. We close our ears and eyes to Him, and instead look to anyone and anything to fit our own narrative.

On the cross, Jesus was instituting a new covenant with his people. He was fulfilling His vows, the words of the Prophets, and the letter of the Law. While the ways of God don't always make sense at the time, we can acknowledge Jesus as the One who saves as we keep our eyes and hearts fixed firmly on Him.

*Heavenly Father, you are the God who saves. In what ways have I closed my eyes, ears, and heart to what you want me to know and understand about who you are and what you do? Give me ears to hear your Word to me so I may respond to you in faith.*

## REDEMPTION

Tuesday

*“What shall I do, then, with Jesus who is called the Messiah?” Pilate asked. They all answered, ‘Crucify him!’”*

Matthew 27:22

Pilate offered up the life of Jesus in the court of public opinion. As the crowd cried for the execution of an innocent man, Pilate sought to save himself. He “washed his hands” of the matter and allowed the mob to dictate. He served himself, not God nor the people he ruled.

Sin, in the same way, serves itself. It seeks its own protection. It has no concern for God nor those it rules. Sin says “crucify” whatever comes up against it. Sin, the sin of every person who has or ever will live, crucified Jesus, and in doing so, unwittingly came to its own demise.

There is no condemnation in Christ. As we come to Jesus, we can acknowledge our desire to serve, protect, and save ourselves. We let Him put to death the sinful nature as we worship and serve Jesus, the One who truly saves.

*Holy and Loving God, you work all things for the good of those who love you. In your wisdom, you used our own weakness, our own sin to bring about Your salvation. In Christ, You have crucified the old self ruled by sin so that we can be set free. What do I need to let die so I can live more fully for you?*

## REDEMPTION

Wednesday

*“Just as there were many who were appalled at him — his appearance was so disfigured beyond that of any human being and his form marred beyond human likeness — so he will sprinkle many nations, and kings will shut their mouths because of him.”*

Isaiah 52:14-15a

Jesus, King of kings, Lord of lords, Savior of the World, Friend of sinners, was beaten to a bloody pulp. Unrecognizable. Skin torn, bone and muscle exposed. Naked. Bleeding. Dying.

People tried with all their might to stop the plan of God, to destroy God Himself. This is us when left to our own devices. We may think we would never have participated in this act of brutality, but every time we let sin rule, we disfigure the image of Jesus to the world.

Jesus has set us free from the sin that we don't even recognize as sin. As we say “yes” to Jesus, we can say “no” to everything that mars His image. Jesus was resolved in His purpose, God's purpose. As the people of God, His resolve can be our resolve in displaying His love and grace to a hurting world.

*Jesus, You willingly went to the cross on our behalf. You let our sin have its way for a time so that we could be healed and set free from that very sin. Show me the ways I let sin rule me, the ways I distort your image. Establish your truth firmly in my heart so the world may see the beauty of who you are and what you've done.*

## REDEMPTION

Thursday

*"He made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death – even death on a cross!"*

Philippians 2:7-8

Jesus, God himself, King of kings, took on the nature of a servant. He limited himself to the physical world and placed himself with the lowliest of lowly's. He was the most obedient servant who ever lived. And when obedience led him to the cross, he went willingly.

Humility and servant-hood can seem like a step back, holding yourself back from all you could actually achieve. And even in this situation, it seems that it did not end well for Jesus. His offering Himself up in obedience appears to have ended in failure.

While we know the rest of the story, that God exalted Jesus to the highest place, the question still lingers: what do we do when obedience appears to lead to defeat, even death? Jesus trusted God in his obedience knowing His word brings victory and life. We can trust Him as well.

*Lord Jesus, you lived not for yourself, but for us. For me. You offered yourself up as a sacrifice in obedience to your Father. What doubts, questions, and fears hold me back from responding with humility in obedience to you?  
Help me to trust you more fully.*

## REDEMPTION

Friday

*“During the days of Jesus’ life on earth, he offered up prayers and petitions with fervent cries and tears to the one who could save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission.”*

Hebrews 5:7

Jesus prayed regularly. He called out to God to save Him from death. He knew the plan. He understood the purpose. And yet, as a man, the curse of death could not be ignored. Jesus would experience great pain - physically, emotionally, mentally, and most significantly, spiritually.

Jesus was heard because of His reverent submission. As He acknowledged the reality of His situation, and the reality of every emotion, maybe even fear, He didn't let these rule His response. Rather, He responded to the truth that God is good and faithful.

Because Jesus submitted Himself to the goodness of God, the curse of death (eternal separation from God) is broken for everyone who believes. God is good. We can trust Him as we come before Him honest and vulnerable. We can trust Him as we submit in reverence to His word.

*Heavenly Father, You are good. Jesus poured Himself out before you as he poured himself out for us. As I follow the example of Jesus, I come before you honestly about the situations that trouble me. Show me your goodness as I desire to do your will.*



## REDEMPTION

Saturday

*"But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed."*  
Isaiah 53:5

Jesus was pierced for our rebellion against God, our knowingly doing wrong. He was crushed for our wickedness of heart. We deserve to be punished for the things we've done, even the things we want to do because with each action and thought, we set ourselves up against the goodness of God.

Even in the middle of doing wrong, what we truly want is for things to be made right. When we don't trust God, we go our own way. We take matters into our own hands. If we had received the punishment we deserved, things may have been "made right", but there would be no peace. We would be eternally separated from God.

But when Jesus took our punishment, we received the peace of eternal life with God. We are healed, both from the desire to sin and the residual effects of sin. Starting today, even right now, we can choose to live a life of peace. In Christ, all things are made perfectly right.

*Jesus, is "thank you" even enough to express my gratitude to you for taking the punishment I deserve? I admit, there are times when I still want to do what I know is not right. Sometimes, I even carry it out. (Confess anything specific that comes to mind) I'm sorry. Help me to live healed and whole, at peace with you.*

## This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

# RIGHTEOUSNESS

I am thirsty.



# RIGHTEOUSNESS

Sunday

*"Later, knowing that everything had now been finished,  
and so that Scripture would be fulfilled,  
Jesus said, 'I am thirsty.'"  
John 19:28*

Jesus had been on the cross for hours. He is physically exhausted to say the least. There are no words to describe His pain other than excruciating. And yet, in this moment, God's Word and the Prophets are still loud and clear in the mind of Christ.

Jesus knows the end of this life is coming. He knows His purpose and He has done everything needed to fulfill the Law. All that's left is to fulfill the Prophets. So Jesus speaks the words needed to require a response from those within earshot.

Jesus on the cross was no doubt physically thirsty, but more than that, the driest places of His soul longed for the righteousness of God. Man had judged Jesus incorrectly: guilty. God would judge Jesus according to His perfect law. In Jesus there would be no sin found.

*Father God, thank you that you are faithful and  
righteous. You judge perfectly every time. In your  
righteousness you can do nothing else. How do I  
misjudge you and hold your goodness against you? Give  
me eyes to see the error of my ways so I can see the  
fullness of your glory more clearly.*

## RIGHTEOUSNESS

Monday

*"A jar of wine vinegar was there, so they soaked a sponge in it, put the sponge on a stalk of the hyssop plant, and lifted it to Jesus' lips."*

John 19:29

A vessel of wine vinegar was kept nearby rather than wine or simply water. Mixed with the bitter herb of hyssop and water, no thirst would be quenched with this drink. Could Jesus hear the taunt of His enemy? "You turned water into wine; you could turn this into cool, refreshing water."

The words Jesus spoke would elicit a response that would fulfill Scripture. And while it may appear kind to offer Him any liquid, it was one more act of torment, one more act of disrespect and dishonor shown to King Jesus.

Jesus' thirst would ultimately be quenched by the faithfulness of God to raise him from the dead and restore Him to His rightful place: seated on his throne in the kingdom of heaven. In Christ, we too are saved from death and the bitterness of God's wrath. Even now, the gift of His Spirit offers all who believe refreshment for the soul.

*Lord Jesus, you are the Word of God. Every word you speak through Scripture elicits a response. What does my response to your word tell you about my heart toward you? May it be my desire to honor you in all I do.*

## RIGHTEOUSNESS

Tuesday

*"God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God." 2 Corinthians 5:21*

Jesus had no sin. He was obedient to the Father in every way. Jesus was innocent of all wrongdoing. Every accusation that was leveled at him was without merit. Jesus: the perfect sacrifice for sin, without blemish or defect.

God made him to be sin for us. Jesus became sin! God has made Jesus our scapegoat by placing all of our sin upon him. He is the One we lay our sin upon when we agree with God about our sin. God doesn't count our sin against us. Jesus took it all!

It was God's desire that all who believe and trust in Jesus would become the righteousness of God. We who are full of sin, deserving every accusation leveled at Jesus, receive from God without merit His righteousness. In Christ, we are justified. Because of what He did, we are found obedient to the law.

*Heavenly Father, You are righteous. You are perfect and Jesus has made us perfectly right with you. In what ways do I still respond out of a place of sin rather than displaying your good and upright ways?  
Show me a new way to live.*

# RIGHTEOUSNESS

Wednesday

*"Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat!"*

Isaiah 55:1a

God invites us to come to Him. He calls to all who are parched and poor. When life is dry and hard, He provides a source of water that refreshes and renews. He has purchased what truly nourishes and brings life to our souls. He freely gives to all who come.

Jesus on the cross paid the price for our sin. We owed a debt to God for our disobedience and the perfect law of God requires payment to be made, to settle the matter legally. Without Jesus, this debt weighs us down because there is no way to make things right on our own. It's a price we could never repay.

Jesus invites us not to wait. The price has been paid; it is a free gift of God. All has been made ready. Come now, empty handed, dry and thirsty. In Christ, we are set free from the bondage and weight of sin. In its place, we receive life and restoration for the soul, all that truly satisfies.

*Heavenly Father, you are patient and kind. You have satisfied the law as you satisfy our souls. There is no need that can't be given to you. What weighs me down today and leaves me broke and feeling broken?  
May I receive your restoration for my soul.*

## RIGHTEOUSNESS

Thursday

*"Jesus answered, 'Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life.'"*  
*John 4:13-14*

Jesus speaks about the practical reality of life. It takes more than one cup of water to satisfy the thirst experienced throughout a lifetime. We will need more; every day, multiple times a day. But Jesus offers "water" that once given will never run dry. Not only that, it will increase and spill over into eternity.

Jesus answered the woman at the well. A woman, a Samaritan, who was divorced multiple times and living with a man who was not her husband, shunned by her community, alone in the middle of the day. Jesus, a Rabbi, a holy man, offers this woman spiritual truth in place of worldly understanding. He offers her a glimpse into the fullness of His kingdom yet to come.

Through the power of the Holy Spirit, Jesus continues to offer us truth for today and understanding of all that is to come. He guarantees eternal life for all who believe regardless of who you are and what you've done. His Spirit gives and brings fresh life that wells up and bubbles over. Each day brings us closer to Him.

*Holy Spirit, thank you for the work you have done and continue to do in my life. You continue to draw me closer as you remind me of the good work Jesus has done on my behalf and the good work he calls me to do in His name. You are the well that never runs dry.*



# RIGHTEOUSNESS

Friday

*"As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, my God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When can I go and meet with God?"*

Psalm 42:1-2

As natural as it is for a deer to thirst for water, so does the human soul thirst for God. Jesus was known for going off alone at all times of the night or day to meet with God. He praised and prayed, cried out to and relied on, trusted and believed the one who would save Him from death.

As we long for the one who knows us, cares for us, and loves us, God brings satisfaction to our deepest parts. Whether everything in life is going well or all seems to be going wrong, we can put our hope in God and our Savior Jesus Christ. When people taunt us and ask, "Where is your God?", we can know that God has already had the last word.

Jesus has thrown open the doors to God's throne room for all who believe. One day, we will see Jesus face to face. As we wait for that day, we can follow His example and this day bring all things to God through the power of His Spirit, in the name of His Son, Jesus.

*My God, my God, you are the living God. When can I go and meet with you? Any time. All the time. You are always available. You are always with me. No matter where I am, You are there also. Teach me to live in your constant presence. Show me how close you really are.*

# RIGHTEOUSNESS

Saturday

*"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled."*

Matthew 5:6

God extends the benefits of His favor to those who crave His righteousness. Jesus promises that those who long for God to make things right will be filled. Those who day after day plead their case before God; they will be satisfied.

In this world, there are troubles. People are wronged and do wrong. Sin prevails in so many ways. Jesus had been wronged in the judgment of the Pharisees and Chief Priests, but God's justice would prevail. Jesus would be vindicated.

In John 4, Jesus, after being urged to eat, states that his food is to do the will of the one who sent him and finish his work. There is a day coming when the righteousness of God will be seen by all. Until that day, the Father's work is still to be done. Our longing will be filled as we do the will of the One who sends us.

*Heavenly Father, You bless all who desire a right relationship with you. You bless all who desire to live according to your right ways. When I feel empty and dry, may I be filled and satisfied as I walk with you in your purpose and will in and for my life.*

[illegible]

# FREEDOM

It is finished.



# FREEDOM

Sunday

*"When he had received his drink, Jesus said, 'It is finished.'  
With that he bowed his head and gave up his spirit."*

John 19:30

Jesus finished His mission. He left nothing on the table, nothing half way, almost complete, or good enough. With precision Jesus did everything His Father gave Him to do. Even in His death, no one took His life. He willingly laid it down and gave up His spirit.

The curse first instituted in the garden after Adam and Eve sinned and ate of the forbidden fruit has been satisfied. God had foretold of a coming day when a son, born of a woman, would defeat the devil. Jesus Christ is that Son who has victory over the enemy of both God and man.

Jesus isn't just an antidote to sin, He is the remedy. He doesn't just counter sin, He is the cure. He removes the sin as if it never existed. In Christ, we are washed clean by the blood of the Lamb. Everytime we take communion and drink, we are reminded that it is finished. Even as we continue to miss the mark of God's perfection, no trace of sin is found.

*Heavenly Father, you are gracious and compassionate,  
merciful and mighty, righteous in all you do. You delight  
in setting your children free from the bondage of sin.*

*Jesus died so that we could live in the freedom of His  
victory. In your strength, help me let go of the chains that  
I've let rule me, so that you can have full rule over my life.*

# FREEDOM

Monday

*"When the centurion and those with him who were guarding Jesus saw the earthquake and all that had happened, they were terrified, and exclaimed, 'Surely he was the Son of God!'"*

Matthew 27:54

Roman soldiers guarded Jesus as He hung on the cross. They had heard His words and witnessed His interactions with His mother and disciple, the criminals on His left and His right, and with God, His Father. They were so terrified, they couldn't contain what they knew was true: Jesus was surely the Son of God.

When Jesus died, there was an earthquake, rocks split, the curtain in the temple was torn from top to bottom, tombs broke open and the dead were raised to life. Jesus may have gone to the cross in silence, like a lamb to the slaughter, but His spirit left Him with the roar of a lion. When Jesus died, the power of God shook the earth.

This same power of God that lived in Jesus lives in those who trust in and call on His name. By the power of the Holy Spirit, this same power that was evident to the centurion as having come from God, can be evident in the lives of those who follow Jesus.

*Lord Jesus, Son of God, you are all-powerful and yet you do not force yourself or your ways on anyone. As we respond to you, believing and trusting who you are, giving you rule and reign in our hearts, may we be open to living in the fullness of your power so that others can't help but know the truth of who you are.*

# FREEDOM

Tuesday

*"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him."*

John 3:16-17

God loves all people - every tribe, tongue, and nation. God's desire is people will not perish in their sin, but have eternal life in his Son. God sent Jesus to save all people. Those who believe in Him will not be condemned.

In the presence of God is love, joy, and peace. He is patient and kind, gentle and faithful. There we find everything that is good. God is completely in control and we can live according to His will. To be condemned is to be eternally separated from God with no hope of entering His presence. To be separated from Him is to experience everything that is opposed to Him.

In Christ, we can be free from the fear of condemnation for in Christ, there is no condemnation. Because of Jesus we can know we are loved and accepted. Jesus has come so that right now, this very minute, we can be free to experience the fullness of the presence of God.

*Heavenly Father, You are love. You have made a way for us to enter your presence without fear of judgment or condemnation. Help me to hold this truth with gratitude in reverence to You. Each day as I walk freely in your presence, may I experience more of the fullness of your love.*

# FREEDOM

Wednesday

*"Jesus said to her, 'I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; and whoever lives by believing in me will never die.*

*Do you believe this?'"*

John 11:25-26

Jesus says He is the one who gives life to the dead. He is the source of life. As Creator and Author, all life comes from Him. Death is a temporary, transitional state for the one who believes. Jesus asks each person what they believe.

In Christ, we live and move and have our being. He holds all things together. In Him, everything was made that has been made. All things, all people have been created through Him and for Him. Without Him, nothing exists. Without Jesus, there is no life and there is no eternal life.

Jesus holds the power of life and death. In the garden, man may have chosen death in his sin. We may choose death by continuing to walk in disobedience to and disbelief of God, but God chose to give us life through His Son. He invites us and gives us the freedom to choose Him. Do you believe this? Do you believe Him?

*Lord Jesus, You were with God in the beginning. You are God still today. Each day is an opportunity to choose you by freely walking in obedience to You. As I let your Spirit guide and direct my decisions and steps, may I have faith to believe what I cannot yet see.*



# FREEDOM

Thursday

*"Now this is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent."*

John 17:3

Jesus, as He prays in the garden before He is arrested, says that God is the only true God. He is the only one. The only true God sent Jesus, the Messiah. Truly knowing God and Jesus is what it means to have eternal life.

To know God and to know Jesus is to recognize them for who they truly are. Through the power of God's Spirit, we can perceive God's presence and active participation in our lives. Through a personal relationship and experience with Jesus we can come to know the only true God.

Jesus was sent by God with a purpose. Jesus became human so that we could know the Father, and the Son, and by believing what we heard, we could receive His Spirit and have life for all eternity. The devil may have come to steal, kill, and destroy, but Jesus came so that we may have an abundant life that does not end.

*God, You are life. All that is good, right, and true comes from You. Lord, give me wisdom and understanding to discern those things that come up against Your ways. Give me strength to say "no" to the ways the devil tempts me to turn from You so that I can say "yes" in every way to the abundant life found only in You.*

## FREEDOM

Friday

*"When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, 'I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.'"*

John 8:12

Jesus says He is the light of the world. Whoever follows Him, staying close to Him and doing what He does, will never walk in darkness. Instead, that person will receive and possess the light of life.

Jesus gives wisdom and understanding, knowledge and discernment. Sin is like a veil covering our eyes, like a layer of grime that distorts what we see. Jesus removes this veil so we can see all things more clearly. He makes clear the distinctions between life and death, blessings and curses. His Spirit, living in every believer, gives light to see the way of Jesus in every situation.

Jesus is the spark that ignites the energy of life. In His light, there is joy and strength of heart and mind. His Spirit in us gives us the freedom and confidence to approach God and live in obedience to His purpose and will. In Him, we are free to be fully seen.

*Heavenly Father, you give sight to the blind.  
You remove the veil of sin that distorts how we see you,  
ourselves, each other, and our world. Show me what  
causes me to want to hide in the darkness.  
Give me the strength and courage  
with the help of your Spirit,  
to step fully into your light.*

# FREEDOM

Saturday

*“So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.”*

John 8:36

In Jesus, the Son of God, there is freedom. The freedom found in Jesus is certain - it's not partial nor conditional. We experience this freedom by following Jesus: holding to His teachings, doing as He commands, and trusting what He says.

In death, all people are set free from the law and sin. But once we die, there is no decision to be made for God. We have allowed death to be the answer to sin. But while we are alive, we can decide to trust Jesus and accept His death as the answer to our sin. In His sacrifice, while we still live, we can be set free from the law and sin.

Jesus told His disciples that it would be for their good if he were to go away. After his ascension, he poured out His Spirit on all who believed. He continues to do this today. In Christ, we no longer live by the law and the consequences of sin, but rather, we are truly free to live by His Spirit who is alive within us.

*Faithful Jesus, You always did what pleased the Father.  
And it pleased the Father to set us free. When life feels  
hard and confined, show me what it looks like to let you  
loosen the chains. Give me the strength to walk in  
freedom as I choose what pleases you.*

## This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

# SURRENDER

Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.



# SURRENDER

Sunday

*“Jesus called out with a loud voice, ‘Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.’ When he had said this, he breathed his last.”*

Luke 23:46

With His last breath, Jesus made sure all could hear His final words. He had not given up on God. He had not turned away from the One who could save. But rather demonstrated His commitment to the Father entrusting Himself fully into the Father’s hands.

Jesus didn’t wait until this moment on the cross to commit His life to God. Unlike the repentant criminal, Jesus had spent His entire life devoted to God the Father. Through every joy and celebration, every hardship and sorrow, Jesus remained faithful.

During His lifetime, Jesus read, learned, and committed God’s Word to His mind and heart. Jesus spent time alone in the presence of God bringing everything to Him in prayer. Jesus lived out God’s command to love Him and love others as He lived by the Spirit. Jesus entrusted and committed His entire life to God and with His help, we can as well.

*Heavenly Father, You are trustworthy in all things in all ways. Even today, right now you are drawing close to me as I draw close to you. Show me what keeps me from your presence, your word, and your people. With my last breath, with every breath, may I proclaim your faithfulness.*

# SURRENDER

Monday

*"When all the people who had gathered to witness this sight saw what took place, they beat their breasts and went away."*

Luke 23:48

People came to witness the crucifixion of Jesus. Were they the same people who had shouted, "Crucify him!" just days before? When they saw what happened, they realized the gravity of all that had taken place. They beat their breasts, taking it to heart, and went away.

Is our joy, recognition, and repentance short-lived or long-lasting? Do we take the sacrifice of Jesus and our part in it to heart but walk away, soon forgetting as we settle back into the old pattern of life? Or does this moment stay with us, taking root as we remain committed to a new way of life with Jesus?

God has given each person the freedom to decide how they will respond to Jesus. We can walk toward Him or we can walk away from Him. Observing only goes so far and only lasts so long. At some point, a step must be taken. We can decide to let the truth of our sin draw us toward Jesus as we submit it all to Him.

*Jesus, You were resolved in your commitment to the Father, never wavering. But we can agree with you about our need for you one minute, and turn and go our own way the next. Lord, today may you be the new pattern of my life. May every decision and step I take be in direct response to your humble sacrifice.*

# SURRENDER

Tuesday

*"When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly."*

1 Peter 2:23

When wronged, Jesus did not retaliate. He did not seek revenge. He made no threats as He suffered, as He was mistreated; tortured. Jesus let God have the responsibility of judging all He had done, as well as all that was being done to Him.

Jesus sets before us an example of what it means to trust God in all circumstances. It's easy to trust when all is going well, but when we are hurt, accused, or even sentenced, our faith is tested. We may wonder, will we see the righteousness of God prevail on our behalf?

The faithfulness of Jesus to trust His Father brought about the forgiveness of sins and salvation for many. Jesus will come again to judge the living and the dead. We can take matters into our own hands, or we can wait on the One who judges justly. In Christ, we can be certain that God has the victory.

*Heavenly Father, you right every wrong in your perfect time. When I want to react to the pain around me, the pain inside of me, help me to wait on you. Remind me how you had compassion on me as you waited for me to come to you. In your salvation there is joy and complete victory.*



# SURRENDER

Wednesday

*"Jesus answered, 'I am the way and the truth and the life.  
No one comes to the Father except through me.'"*

John 14:6

Jesus says He is the way to the Father. Jesus says He is the truth about the Father. Jesus says He is the one who gives life from the Father. No one can come to God the Father without coming to Jesus first. He is the only way. No other way exists.

We want to have control over every aspect of our lives. We want to believe we are all-knowing, all-powerful; that we can be whatever we want to be or think we should be. That we can get wherever we want by whatever means we deem sufficient. But Jesus says it doesn't work that way.

Jesus has made it possible to know the way to God and eternal life with Him. Jesus has made it possible to not only know if there is a God, but to know the truth about God. Jesus has made it possible to experience the fullness of life as it was meant to be from the very beginning. Thank God, there is a way.

*Father God, You have made a way for all people to know you. Jesus is the perfect representation of your character and nature. You and He are one. Each day, may I set my heart fully on you so I can experience this same oneness with you as I trust your ways, seek your truth, and choose life in Christ.*

## SURRENDER

Thursday

*"You do not delight in sacrifice, or I would bring it; you do not take pleasure in burnt offerings. My sacrifice, O God, is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart you, God, will not despise."*

Psalm 51:16-17

God does not delight in sacrifice or offerings brought over and over again as a means to atone for sin. God receives and esteems a truly repentant heart, broken with conviction of wrongdoing. This sacrifice can only be brought in humility before God.

Jesus walked humbly with God, seeking His mercy and justice. He was wholeheartedly devoted to the pleasure and purpose of His Father. Just as we desire real change from someone who has wronged us, and not just one apology after another, God desires a heart that desires the change a life in Christ brings.

In Christ, sacrifice is found in life, not in death. Each day we lay out before God every thought, every emotion, and every longing. We give Him everything we try to control as we acknowledge He is the One in control of all things. The best sacrifice we can offer is a life lived in the sacrifice of Jesus.

*Heavenly Father, You desire good things for your children. You love mercy and justice and offer it to all who come to you. Lord, I don't want to just go through the motions. May I walk humbly with you, seeking to know your ways, desiring to do your will. Let this be my true and proper worship to you.*

# SURRENDER

Friday

*"Then he said to them all: "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me."*

Luke 9:23

Jesus tells his disciples that they will have to deny themselves. If they want to be his disciples, they will need to choose His way over their own way. Every day they will need to pick up their cross. They must risk being nailed to it as they willingly follow Jesus wherever He leads.

Every day, Jesus did the will of the Father. There was only so much time. He numbered his days making the most of every opportunity to speak the truth of God in love to all who would listen. He cared for others knowing God was caring for Him. God would continue to meet every need.

Jesus did not hide the truth. In giving us His word, we can be certain that in this world, there will be trouble. There is a cost to following Jesus. As we count the cost and lay our lives down for Him, we can say with hearts fully surrendered that we have already been crucified with Christ. And in Christ, God will lift us up again.

*Lord Jesus, You always speak the truth in love. Teach me to number my days so that I can make much of you in every opportunity you place before me. Every word and action comes with a cost, but nothing in this world can compare to the glorious riches of eternal life with you.*

# SURRENDER

Saturday

*"Abba, Father,' he (Jesus) said, 'everything is possible for you. Take this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will.'"*

Mark 14:36

On the night in which Jesus was betrayed, he prayed to God, calling him "Daddy". Jesus repeats the words He knows are true: everything is possible for God. He asked that the trial He was about to endure not happen. But if it had to, if there was no other way, He would without hesitation surrender His will for God's.

Jesus knew better than anyone that everything was possible with God. How many times had his mother, Mary, told him that very thing? Jesus the man didn't want to suffer anything He didn't need to. Who would? And yet, He surrendered it all in complete obedience to the will of His Father. He would once again go where the Father sent Him.

In the Trinity (God the Father, God the Son, and God the Spirit) there is complete wholeness. All that has happened is for our benefit, so that we can experience the rest of God that was ours at creation. As Jesus walked through the valley of the shadow of death, he showed us how surrender is the way to experience perfect union, joyful community, and peace beyond all we can comprehend.

*Heavenly Father, in you is peace and wholeness; we lack no good thing. Teach me to settle into life with you so I can know your rest more fully. Help me to trust you knowing with you all things are possible. Not what I will, but always and only Your will be done on earth as in heaven.*

## This image shows a single page of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page, typical of notebook or ledger paper. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the page.

# TRIUMPH

Look, the lamb of God...



# TRIUMPH

## Easter Sunday

*"The next day John (the Baptist) saw Jesus coming toward him and said, 'Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world!'"*

John 1:29

John the Baptist was sent to prepare the way for the Lord, the Messiah. When he saw Jesus he declared Jesus was the Lamb of God. Jesus would take away the sins of the world.

Jesus, the perfect sacrifice, without blemish or defect, blameless and innocent, offers forgiveness of sins and the assurance of eternal life when we believe and trust Him. Jesus became sin for us, atoning for our sin, reconciling us to God and to one another. Now, rather than counting our sins against us, God credits our belief in Jesus as righteousness. By His blood we are redeemed, released from our debt and bought back from slavery, free to live with God and for God. Jesus surrendered His rights as God to serve us, to provide for and protect us. He is the Good Shepherd who lays down His life for His sheep.

The enemy came to steal, kill, and destroy - this is the curse of sin and death. Jesus came so that we may have life in abundance. As we follow Him, believing His Word of truth and grace, we surrender our right to go our own way and willingly follow wherever He leads. We no longer look for life among the dead things of this world. Jesus has done it! Jesus is alive! He is risen. He is risen indeed!

*Lord God, you are holy. Salvation belongs to you and to the Lamb. Jesus, you are faithful and true. You have set us free from the bondage of sin, from the sting of death.*

*In faith, we can know life as we walk by your Spirit.*

*We proclaim life in your name and experience  
life in your kingdom without end.*

*All praise, honor, and glory be yours.*