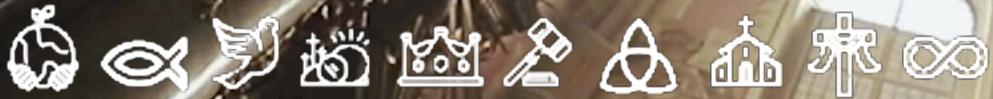


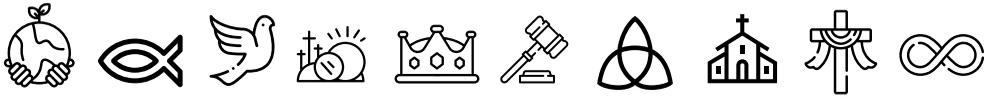
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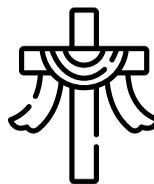
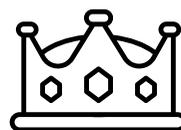




THIS JOURNAL BELONGS TO:

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# HOW TO USE THIS JOURNAL

Within these pages you will find passages of scripture to read and meditate on, devotionals for each day written by our staff for deeper insight into God's word, and space to reflect and write your thoughts as we journey through the Apostles Creed together.

Take time each day to read, pray and reflect on what God is saying to you. Use this space to deepen your understanding of what we believe, why we believe it, and what this can mean in your daily life.

There is no right or wrong way to use this journal; a journal can be a powerful tool; used to deepen and transform the way you hear from God and strengthen your relationship with Him.

Jot down thoughts, questions and prayers. Underline points that speak to you. Mark up this book, bring it to church (whether that's on your couch, or in a physical service), invite God to show up for you in these pages, throughout these next 10 weeks.

If it is helpful, you can use the H.E.A.R. acronym for each day's devotional study:

## H - Highlight

What words, phrases, verses stand out to you as you read?  
Underline them or write them down.

## E - Explain

Sum the passage up in your own words.

## A - Apply

Ask: Lord, what do you want to say to me from this passage?

## R - Respond

Ask: Lord, what are you asking me to do in response to your Word?

Each of these four steps creates an atmosphere for hearing the voice of God. After each day of reading the devotional provided in this book, take some time for studying God's word and listening to what God would like to say to you.

Ultimately, we pray that this journal will equip you with extra tools, to help you deepen your relationship, and help you hear the voice of God in a new way.

# BIBLE PASSAGE READING GUIDE

## **“I BELIEVE IN GOD, THE FATHER ALMIGHTY, CREATOR OF HEAVEN AND EARTH”**

Sunday, July 4: Matthew 6:7-13; 7:7-11

Monday, July 5: Psalm 77

Tuesday, July 6: Isaiah 46

Wednesday, July 7: Luke 15: 11-32

Thursday, July 8: Galatians 4:4-7

Friday, July 9: Genesis 1-2

Saturday, July 10: Psalm 104

## **“I BELIEVE IN JESUS CHRIST, HIS ONLY SON, OUR LORD”**

Sunday, July 11: Colossians 1:15-20

Monday, July 12: Isaiah 9:1-7

Tuesday, July 13: Mark 1:16-20; 2:13-17

Wednesday, July 14: Matthew 11:25-30

Thursday, July 15: John 10:22-42

Friday, July 16: Ephesians 2

Saturday, July 17: Matthew 16:13-20

## **“BIRTH AND LIFE: CONCEIVED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT, BORN OF THE VIRGIN MARY”**

Sunday, July 18: Luke 1:26-38

Monday, July 19: Isaiah 7:10-25

Tuesday, July 20: Luke 1:26-38

Wednesday, July 21: Matthew 1:18-25

Thursday, July 22: Luke 2:1-20

Friday, July 23: Colossians 2:6-10

Saturday, July 24: Galatians 4:1-7

## **“DEATH: SUFFERED UNDER PONTIUS PILATE, WAS CRUCIFIED, DEAD AND BURIED”**

Sunday, July 25: John 18:28-19:16

Monday, July 26: Isaiah 53

Tuesday, July 27: Matthew 27:11-26

Wednesday, July 28: Matthew 27:27-66

Thursday, July 29: Hebrews 13:10-14

Friday, July 30: 1 Peter 3:13-22

Saturday, July 31: Philippians 2:1-11

## **“RESURRECTION & ASCENSION: THE THIRD DAY HE ROSE AGAIN FROM THE DEAD. HE ASCENDED TO HEAVEN AND IS SEATED AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD THE FATHER ALMIGHTY”**

Sunday, August 1: Matthew 27:32-28:10

Monday, August 2: Matthew 28

Tuesday, August 3: Mark 16

Wednesday, August 4: Luke 24

Thursday, August 5: John 20

Friday, August 6: Romans 6:1-11

Saturday, August 7: Romans 8:31-39

### **“RETURN: HE WILL COME TO JUDGE THE LIVING AND THE DEAD”**

Sunday, August 8: 1 Thessalonians 4 and Revelation

Monday, August 9: 2 Timothy 4:1-8

Tuesday, August 10: 2 Corinthians 5:1-10

Wednesday, August 11: John 2:23-3:21

Thursday, August 12: James 4:1-12

Friday, August 13: James 5:7-12

Saturday, August 14: Matthew 7:21-29

### **“I BELIEVE IN THE HOLY SPIRIT”**

Sunday, August 15: John 14:18-25

Monday, August 16: John 16:5-15

Tuesday, August 17: Acts 2:1-41

Wednesday, August 18: Galatians 5:16-26

Thursday, August 19: Acts 10:34-48

Friday, August 20: 1 Corinthians 12:1-11

Saturday, August 21: Titus 3:1-8

### **“THE CHURCH: I BELIEVE IN THE HOLY CATHOLIC CHURCH, THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS”**

Sunday, August 22: John 13:31-38

Monday, August 23: John 17

Tuesday, August 24: Acts 2:42-47

Wednesday, August 25: Acts 4:23-37

Thursday, August 26: Psalm 133

Friday, August 27: Hebrews 12:1-13

Saturday, August 28: 1 Timothy 2-3

### **“I BELIEVE IN THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS”**

Sunday, August 29: Romans 3:21-31

Monday, August 30: Romans 5-6

Tuesday, August 31: Psalm 86

Wednesday, September 1: Luke 7:36-50

Thursday, September 2: 2 Colossians 2:6-23

Friday, September 3: 1 John 1:5-10

Saturday, September 4: 1 Corinthians 11:23-34

### **“OUR HOPE: I BELIEVE IN THE RESURRECTION OF THE BODY AND THE LIFE EVERLASTING”**

Sunday, September 5: 1 Corinthians 15

Monday, September 6: 2 Corinthians 5:1-10

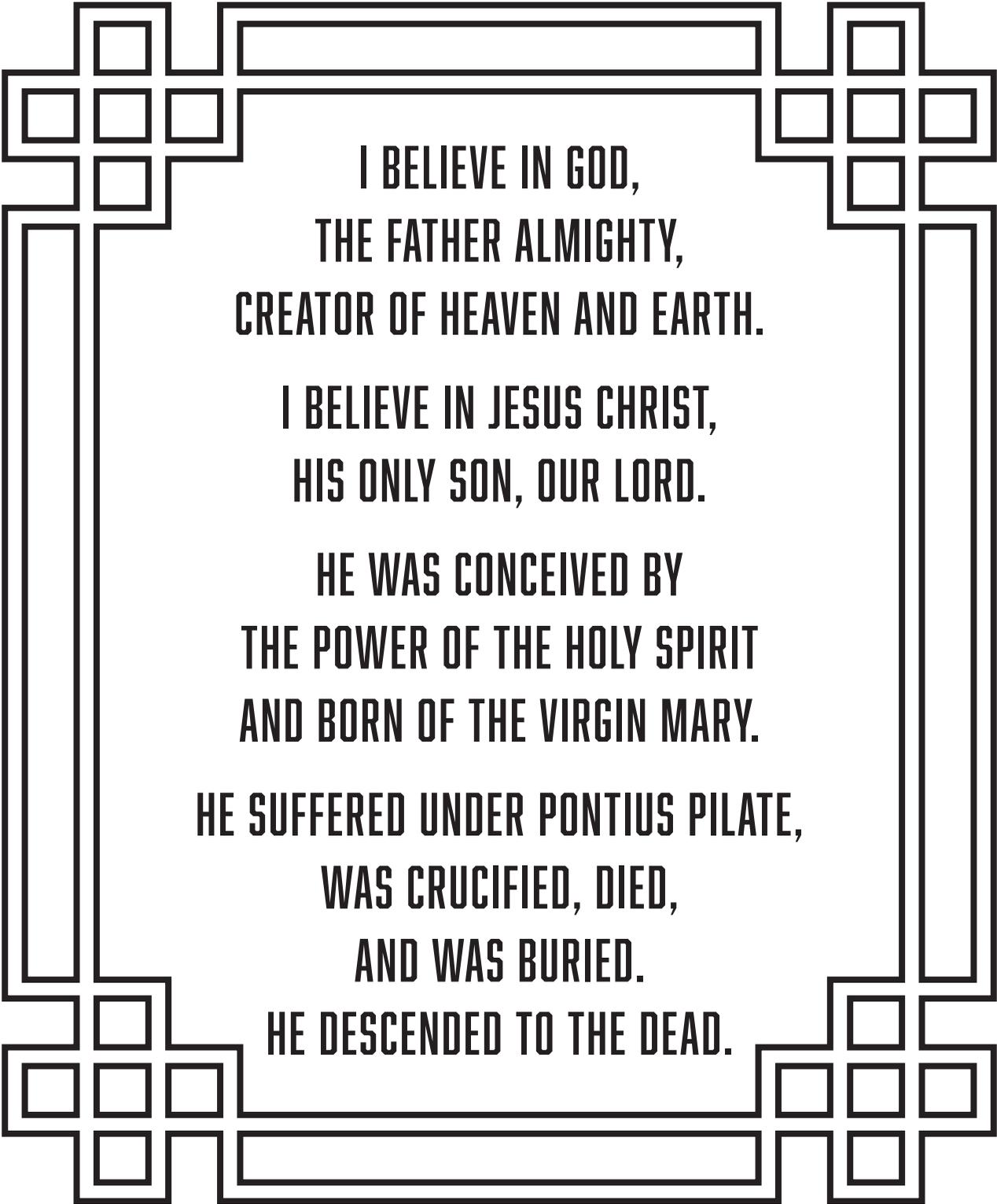
Tuesday, September 7: 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

Wednesday, September 8: John 11:17-27

Thursday, September 9: John 3:1-21

Friday, September 10: 1 John 5

Saturday, September 11: Revelation 21-22



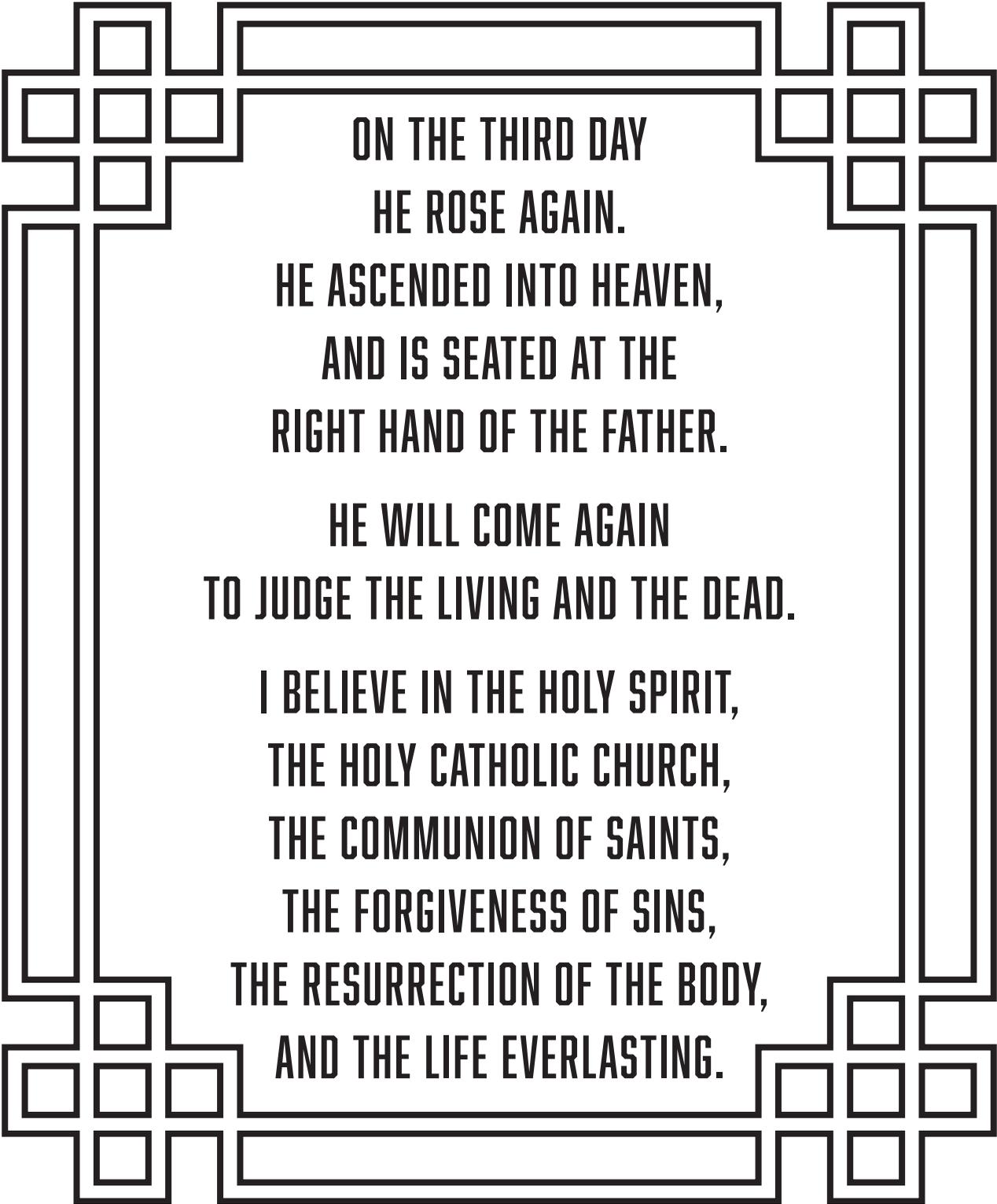
**I BELIEVE IN GOD,  
THE FATHER ALMIGHTY,  
CREATOR OF HEAVEN AND EARTH.**

**I BELIEVE IN JESUS CHRIST,  
HIS ONLY SON, OUR LORD.**

**HE WAS CONCEIVED BY  
THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT  
AND BORN OF THE VIRGIN MARY.**

**HE SUFFERED UNDER PONTIUS PILATE,  
WAS CRUCIFIED, DIED,  
AND WAS BURIED.**

**HE DESCENDED TO THE DEAD.**



**ON THE THIRD DAY  
HE ROSE AGAIN.  
HE ASCENDED INTO HEAVEN,  
AND IS SEATED AT THE  
RIGHT HAND OF THE FATHER.**

**HE WILL COME AGAIN  
TO JUDGE THE LIVING AND THE DEAD.**

**I BELIEVE IN THE HOLY SPIRIT,  
THE HOLY CATHOLIC CHURCH,  
THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS,  
THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS,  
THE RESURRECTION OF THE BODY,  
AND THE LIFE EVERLASTING.**









# NOTES:

## THURSDAY, JULY 8, 2021

### Galatians 4:4-7 | Thoughts from Monica

Turning through the pages of the Bible, we find countless descriptions of God. The biblical authors use grand imagery and metaphors as they seek to describe the God who created the world, who rescued Israel from slavery and entered into covenant with them, the God who protected His people through generations of exile and then entered into a new covenant by sending His Son to die for all mankind. God is like a fortress, a refuge, a shelter, a refiner, a rock, an eagle – the list goes on and on. I love to worship and praise God using these names.

However, my favourite is the name found in Galatians 4:6 – Father. Or more specifically, Abba Father, which means “Daddy”.

Can we just stop and marvel at this for a moment? The God who created the *entire universe*, who set the moon and stars into place, who controls the wind and the waves, calls you *His child*.

Isn't that amazing?

A few years ago, my sister adopted her son, making him legally a part of our family. He didn't do anything to earn that, he didn't buy or work his way into the family. She chose him and he now is a part of our family, just as much as any of the rest of us who were born into the family.

It's like that for us with God – we can't earn a place in God's family. We have been chosen by God – we have been adopted and are now part of the family. The only response to that is thankfulness! Take time today to talk with your heavenly Father, thanking Him for adopting you into this wonderful family of God.



# NOTES:

## SATURDAY, JULY 10, 2021

### Psalm 104 | Thoughts from Rosie

God not only creates, but He maintains and loves His creation.

I just love how the Psalmist gives such a poetic summary of God's creation of the world. Everything in nature works so seamlessly together. It's so simple, but so beautifully intricate as well. You can almost hear the joy the author is expressing through this Psalm.

Reading it reminds me that the Lord and His care for His creation should be the source of our joy as well. It's so easy to allow our circumstances to discourage us, but I want to encourage you today to find your joy in the Lord, in the creator of Heaven and Earth.

Read through this passage today; begin and end your day praising God, just as this Psalm does.





# NOTES:

## MONDAY, JULY 12, 2021

Isaiah 9:1-7 | Thoughts from Pam

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What does it mean to believe Jesus Christ is Lord?

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What kind of lord is He?

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Some words from Isaiah 9:

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*“The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; a light has dawned on those living in the land of darkness... For a child will be born FOR US, a son will be given TO US, and the government will be upon his shoulders. He will be named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.”*

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Jesus is the Lord who, when it was impossible for us to get to him, he came FOR US, TO US.

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He came to speak counsel over our lives with eternal might and profound peace. He came to bear the weight of society but also to rule it. He came to be light in the land of darkness.

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All of these things speak rescue to me - Jesus is a lord who not only *rules* but *rescues*. To believe that Jesus is Lord is to believe that He is about this work every day in our lives. To which my own heart cries: “help my unbelief”.

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Today, join me in trusting in His rescue and surrendering to His rule.

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# NOTES:

## WEDNESDAY, JULY 14, 2021

Matthew 11:25-30 | Thoughts from Glenda

For years I thought that following Jesus meant giving of my time, energy and resources. I thought that my relationship with Jesus was like a trough that I had to fill. I poured my buckets of energy into this trough over and over again. Eventually, I hit a wall. I had no more buckets to dump. It was only then that I understood what it meant; that my relationship wasn't one where I just served Him, but I received.

Jesus wants to fill you. The filling of God comes not to those who are the smartest or hardest working, but even the likes of me. Those with the simplest faith, completely dependent like an infant. And this filling isn't a chore; it is His good pleasure. Jesus brings a deep kind of soul rest. The heavy burden I placed on myself was replaced by his yoke of delight. Jesus became gentle and lowly even though He is God. He did not count equality with God something to be wielded like a scepter. But he emptied himself, took the form of a servant, and came not to be served, but to serve. He wasn't looking for slave labour- he wanted me to be lifted up and loved. My service became not something I owed and could never stop owing, but driven by the delight of knowing Jesus.

Take time today to sit with Jesus. Listen to Him speak to you in stillness. Ask Him what you are carrying in His name that you should lay down. He wants to know you and to fill you.



# NOTES:

## FRIDAY, JULY 16, 2021

### Ephesians 2 | Thoughts from Mark

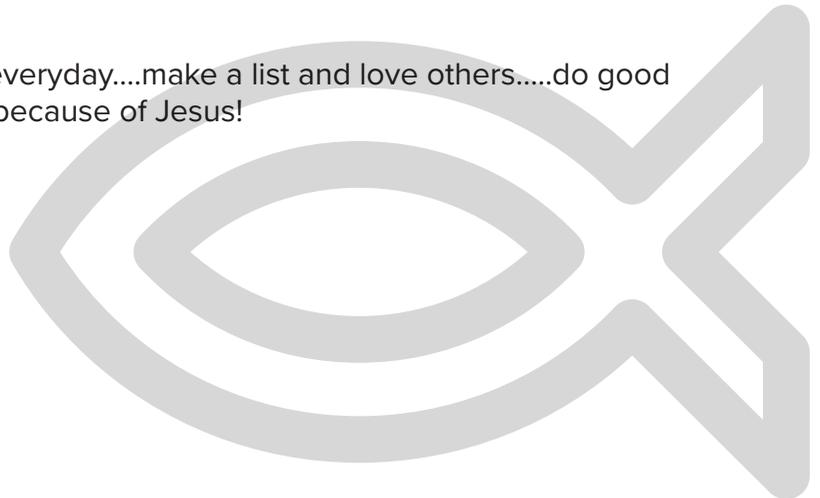
I love doing things for people. I can drive them around, buy them groceries, coffee, food, whatever people need. I seemingly get invited to help move people, build things with people, do physical labour tasks, or raise money for something. I love all these things.

Most likely, my love for these things comes because I love people, but the love for serving people and engaging in loving people in tangible ways is because of the words from Ephesians 2: 10. This verse says *"I, as God's handiwork, am created to do good works."*

I love that because the verses before this talk about how I have been made alive in Christ. By His grace and love in my life, because of who Jesus is and what Jesus did for me, I am given life. I am loved!! This is my motivation to love others. This is my drive to be a servant. It is what I am created for because of who Jesus is and because of what Jesus did.

Today, reflect on two things. What Jesus did for you and how this gives you new life. Second, read verse 10 of Ephesians 2 and list ways God has created you to do good works for others.

Do this everyday....make a list and love others....do good works....because of Jesus!









# NOTES:

## TUESDAY, JULY 20, 2021

Luke 1:26-38 | Thoughts from Eric

Fully God and fully man.

Christ's birth and life is a testament to the fact that He was who He said He was. Born of the Holy Spirit to the virgin Mary, Jesus was God in human flesh. The prophecies that foretold His birth, life, and eventual death speak to this fact, along with the many miracles that Jesus performed throughout his short yet extremely impactful life.

And yet, He was also fully human. He struggled with the same temptations that we face on a regular basis. Being both God and man, Jesus showed us what it means to truly seek after God. He showed us that we, with God's help, are able to live the holy and righteous life that God calls us to lead. We are able to strive after Him, because His life is now in us.

Conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary. The coming together of the divine and human, and the only one who would have the ability to ultimately lay down his life as a sacrifice for us. The perfect, spotless lamb that Isaiah foretold all those years ago:

*"For unto us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." (Isaiah 9:6)*

# WEDNESDAY, JULY 21, 2021

Matthew 1:18-25 | Thoughts from Luke

NOTES:

Larry King, known for his talk show, “Larry King Live” once said, “If I could ask Jesus one question it would be, were you really born to a virgin? Because if he was, that changes everything.”

The gospel of Matthew doesn’t waste any time. The claim right off the start is “Jesus is God”.

Not Jesus is *like* God, nor Jesus *will become* God, nor Jesus is a *prophet of* God. The gospel says, “*You will call Him Immanuel, which means God with us.*”

See, among other things, the virgin birth signals to us that Jesus was not only fully man but fully God. He was indeed conceived by the Holy Spirit.

To engage with Larry King’s question, I’d simply say, everything has changed. For one thing, every baby born after Jesus is dated by Jesus’ birth. If you were born in 2004, you were born two thousand and four years after Jesus.

What has changed in your life since encountering Jesus? Write down a few things and remember them so you can share them with a friend who may be asking a similar question to Larry King.



# NOTES:

# THURSDAY, JULY 22, 2021

Luke 2:1-20 | Thoughts from Jared

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In amongst the scandal and donkeys and chickens, God gave the world this wonderful gift. That night in Luke 2 the Savior of the world entered into the story.

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In an intimate moment, Jesus earthly parents meet him, alongside the animals he created; they are the first to welcome the King of Everything to this earth.

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And in this moment of pure joy, God is like a new dad! He blows up the heavenly Instagram with the news.

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A bright star appears and angels are sent to a bunch of shepherds spamming them with good news!

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And we all know what happens: the shepherds shower the new king with all of their “likes” and share the news to their feed as many times as possible.

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But you see, this is the reality of Jesus birth. It can't be contained!

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I think we need to ask ourselves: “is Jesus birth really just for Christmas?”

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Is it something we just celebrate once and then leave it?

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Because I think I can confidently say that for the people who were there that night, the birth of this baby changed their lives not only that day, but every single day of their lives until they met him again.

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His birth should do the same for us.

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# NOTES:

## SATURDAY, JULY 24, 2021

Galatians 4:1-7 | Thoughts from Rosie

*“We were slaves to the spiritual powers of this world. But when the right time came, God sent his Son, born of a woman...”*

Jesus was fully human and fully God. He was subject to God’s law and fulfilled it perfectly; he was the sacrifice that freed us from the slavery of sin.

This sinful hold on us, that can sometimes feel so permanent, has been broken. I sometimes forget just how incredible this is! God’s adoption of us into his family has changed it all. We can claim what He has provided for us; our full identity as His children.

Be encouraged in this today. Know that you are a child of God, and that Jesus has freed you from the bondage of sin.





# NOTES:

## MONDAY, JULY 26, 2021

Isaiah 53 | Thoughts from Joel

Isaiah 53: 5-6 reads this:

*“He was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed. We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.”*

There’s this profound oxymoron found in this verse: *“The punishment that brought us peace was on Him, and by His wounds, we are healed”*. The famous reformer Martin Luther called this mystery “The Great Exchange”. Our sin was credited to Jesus and the earned righteousness of Jesus was credited to all who believe in His name.

This passage of scripture is the very foundation of our faith. That we have all turned from God. We all have chosen wickedness over righteousness; evil over love; ourselves over our Creator. Each one of us has turned our own way. But propelled by love, God gladly crushed His Son and satisfied His wrath on our behalf. Jesus both gladly and willingly went to the cross to exchange His righteousness for our unrighteousness. Christ paid the everlasting outstanding balance of our sin and asks for nothing in return because nothing can be given in return! This is the greatest news ever- the wrath we deserved being poured out on the substitution of Jesus Christ. It’s because of this we can stand justified today, filled with the Spirit of God.

Take a moment to reflect on the goodness and mercy that God showed you. Thank Christ for paying what we could never afford.





# NOTES:

## WEDNESDAY, JULY 28, 2021

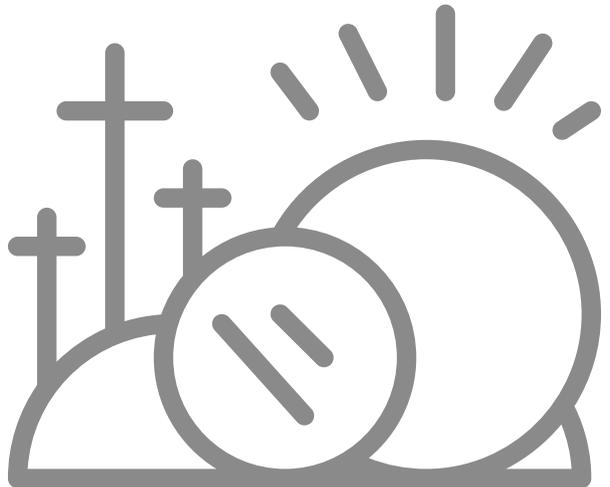
Matthew 27:27-66 | Thoughts from Chelsea

In the second half of Matthew 27 we read that at the hand of Pontius Pilate, Jesus was whipped, beaten, and mocked. He was then nailed to a cross, crucified. Jesus hung, suspended, taking on the sin of the world.

As darkness fell across the land, Christ felt the absence of the Father who is always there. He cried out in agony "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" As the breath left his body, He absorbed all of God's wrath toward mankind, the earth quaked and the curtain was torn. He was buried, his body wrapped in cloth and placed behind a stone.

These statements: He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried - are historical facts, but within these facts lies the truth of what Christ has done for us. He lived the sinless life we could not live. He died the death we deserved to die. He went into the grave meant for us.

What an amazing gift we have been freely given!





# NOTES:

## FRIDAY, JULY 30, 2021

1 Peter 3:13-22 | Thoughts from Glenda

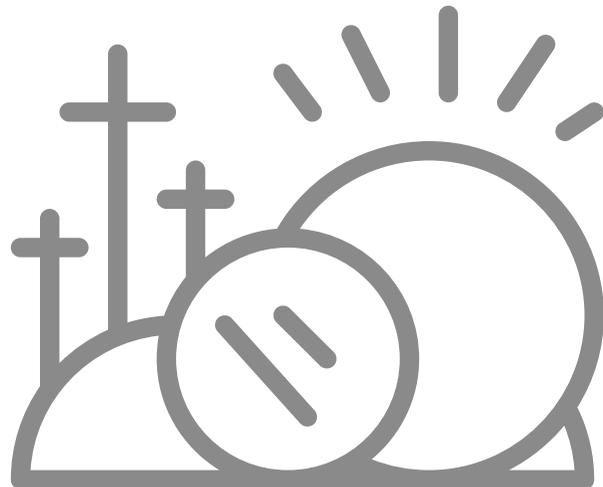
Suffering is not something we strive for. I avoid things that make me suffer, which is where my disdain for running was born.

We have an understanding that we will suffer when we do wrong. Our justice system is based on this. Our morality upholds this. But suffering for doing what is right? This makes us shake our fist in the air and rail at whoever we think is to blame. Other people, bad systems, stupid mistakes, Adam and Eve for the fallen world, or at God who sees and knows all things.

We will suffer. All of us. It is an assumed part of the Christian life. Jesus suffered. We will follow him in suffering. We should not just expect it, but we will identify with Christ through it.

Hebrews reminded us that he suffered outside the gate, so we go out with him to that place. The gospels remind us that when we follow Jesus, we actually deny ourselves and we pick up a cross. Everything evil wants us to believe that our suffering is good for nothing. That God has forsaken us. Verse 22 reminds us that this is a lie.

Nothing is beyond the sight of God. Nothing that comes against us is beyond His hand.













# NOTES:

## THURSDAY, AUGUST 5, 2021

### John 20 | Thoughts from Jeremy

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I love the details in this passage! They help me enter into the events of Jesus resurrection. I can almost see the Beloved Disciple getting to the tomb first and hear Peter panting as he tries to catch up. I can't help but cheer Peter's impulsive bravery – he doesn't linger outside the tomb, he steps right in! The placement of the linens that had held Jesus' body and the cloth that had been wrapped around his head make the words come alive on the page.

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I love the part where Jesus says Mary's name. And, even though I know how it turns out, I almost hold my breath when Jesus turns to Thomas and invites him to touch his wounds. This is real!

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Sometimes I believe Jesus rose again on the third day like a theological truth. But Jesus' resurrection is so much more than a statement in a theology text or words in a creed. This passage reminds me that Jesus did not just come to life theologically. This is real! Jesus really rose from the dead and he is really alive today.

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When I really understand this, it changes how I live. When I know this is real, I respond in worship, like Thomas: "My Lord and my God!"

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# NOTES:

## SATURDAY, AUGUST 7, 2021

Romans 8:31-39 | Thoughts from Joel

We all have this internal allure to stories of the underdog overcoming an obstacle. It seems that the bigger the challenge the protagonist faces, the better the story! This draw to resilience dictates the movies we choose to watch, the books we read, and the stories we love to tell.

Romans 8 is no different. Many people would consider it to be the best chapter in the Bible. It contains one of the most beautifully written and theologically dense passages of scripture. And it eloquently displays the Gospel and explains how, because of Christ, the biggest battles we face are already won.

Paul was a man who faced fierce opposition from all sides. If you read 2 Corinthians 11, you'll see how he continually faced stoning, countless beatings, shipwrecks, snake bites, betrayal, and everything in between. Paul faced the worst of what this world has to offer, and from the outside, he did not have the Cinderella story we all tend to gravitate towards. Yet no matter his external situation Paul writes that we are all more than conquerors through Christ who loves us. Paul rightly proclaims that when we are in Christ we have won the toughest of battles. We've already endured the most vicious of storms. Paul is convinced that nothing in all creation able to separate us from the love of God. The battle is won; we are more than conquerors.

Face your days with this confidence- God's love for you is a deep foundation rooted in His unwavering promise. Take heart knowing that the challenges you face have been already won by the cross of Christ. He loves you, he cares for you, and nothing on this side of heaven can separate you from Him.





# TUESDAY, AUGUST 10, 2021

## NOTES:

2 Corinthians 5:1-10 | Thoughts from Jared

Hey, remember when we could go into work?

Ok, ok, I know some people still can, but you know the feeling that kicks in at some point in the day, when you can't wait for the end of the work day when you can go home! You start looking forward to throwing on your favorite robe or old sweats and relaxing and enjoying all the comfort home has to offer.

We all actually have this same feeling we groan and sigh longing to come into our heavenly home.

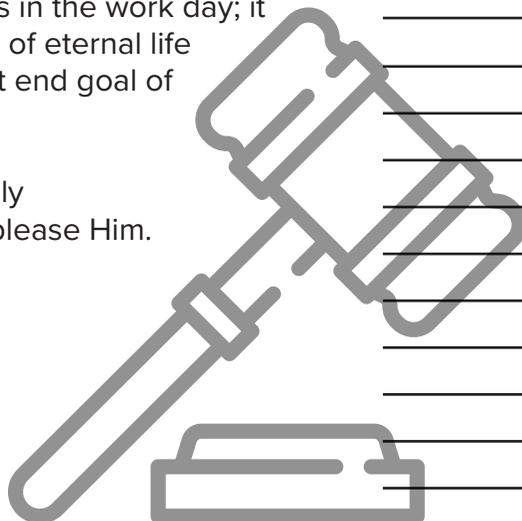
The only difference is we don't get to see our home in heaven just yet.

I think 2 Corinthians 5 gets at what I'm trying to say.

*...we are always confident, even though we know that as long as we live in these bodies we are not at home with the Lord. For we live by believing and not by seeing.*

This feeling is just like when it comes in the work day; it pushes us to remember the promise of eternal life with Christ. It pushes us towards that end goal of finally coming home.

So today lets hope for those heavenly sweat pants and push ourselves to please Him.



# NOTES:

# WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 11, 2021

John 2:23-3:21 | Thoughts from Jeremy

We live in a world where perception is reality. It's not enough to do what is good but you must be seen to be doing what is good. This is especially dangerous when my righteousness is dependent on people's approval: I believe I am good if you approve.

The court of public opinion is notoriously fickle. Jesus knew this, so while many people celebrated him because of the miraculous signs he did, he didn't put too much stock in their affirmation and celebration: he knew human nature.

Further, he knew that the Father is the final judge of what is good. The basis for judgment is how we respond to Jesus, the light. If we try to hide, it means that we already know our deeds and heart will not stand up to exposure by the light. There are lots of ways we try to hide: excuse, justify, lie, etc.

The paradox is that if we stop hiding – stop hiding and start owning our attitudes and interactions – and step into the light, rather than judgment and condemnation, we will receive life and grace. God didn't send Jesus to condemn us but to save us.

However, Jesus is coming again and will judge with truth and justice (Psalm 96:13).





# NOTES:

## FRIDAY, AUGUST 13, 2021

James 5:7-12 | Thoughts from Carol

“He will come to Judge the living and the dead.” Of all the statements in the Apostle’s Creed this is the most difficult for me to profess. When doubts rise up in me it is around the Lord’s return.

The second paragraph of the Apostle’s Creed testifies to Christ’s complete atoning work, including his coming to Earth as a human being, unjust punishment and death, conquering of death by rising from the dead, now sitting, victoriously resurrected in heaven, beside God, the father. His will is done, his kingdom has come in heaven, and on earth... well in part... but we still pray for the whole. Some have expressed it as living in “the already and the not yet”.

When I see a nation cling to a right to bare arms, a country imprison an entire culture and faith, or a city vote down a shelter I am left to wonder, why not yet already? Are you coming, oh Lord, to bring your justice?

The answer from James 5:7 is “be patient”.

To start looking for an answer at verse 7 only tests my patience. But if we back up to James 5:1, to see the context of this call to be patient, we find a warning and rebuke of rich rulers for cheating farmers of their wages. In the NASB or NET translations of the bible, verse 7 begins, “Therefore” or “So” be patient because the judge is right at the door. God sees the injustice and says don’t grumble about each other because Christ will come and he will bring justice for all. Here is the promise that sits behind this line in the creed. “Even so, come, Lord Jesus!”







# NOTES:

## TUESDAY, AUGUST 17, 2021

Acts 2:1-41 | Thoughts from Luke

Acts 2 describes the birth of the church. On this historic day, celebrated yearly as Pentecost, the Spirit of God was poured out on the people of God. Pentecost fulfills Jesus' promise to be with his disciples always. Pentecost also fulfills God's promise to pour out His Spirit on all people.

See, because the Spirit was poured out in Acts 2, we know that God is with His people (presence) and God is in His people (indwelling).

What does this mean for us?

First, like Peter, we don't have to fear or take on life alone because we know God is with us. Look how Peter quotes David, "you will make me full of gladness with your presence."

Second, like Peter, we aren't called to rely on ourselves to do what God called us to do. We aren't expected to be strong and independent but actually, weak and dependent. Notice from Peter's life that he wasn't strong or courageous until the Spirit of God indwelled him; God empowers his church for ministry by indwelling them with Himself.

God is with you and God will equip you.



# NOTES:

## THURSDAY, AUGUST 19, 2021

Acts 10:34-48 | Thoughts from Jeremy

“The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out *even* on the Gentiles.” (vs.45, my emphasis).

Has God ever shown up in a way that astonished you? Have you ever noticed evidence of the Spirit at work in someone you didn't expect?

I'm confronted by the response of the circumcised believers. I know (in theory) that no one is beyond the reach of God's grace and that the Spirit can transform anyone. Yet, there are still times I respond with astonishment, or worse, skepticism, when I see or hear of it happening in some people. I might outwardly express wonder and praise, but I often find myself thinking, “We'll see...”

I want to respond more like Peter: *“I really am learning that God doesn't show partiality to one group of people over another. Rather, in every nation, whoever worships him and does what is right is acceptable to him... These people have received the Holy Spirit just as we have. Surely no one can stop them from being baptized, can they?”* (vs.34-35, 47, my emphasis). Surely no one can stop them from being embraced and included in our warm, loving, Spirit-led family.

This is what the Spirit does!



# NOTES:

# SATURDAY, AUGUST 21, 2021

Titus 3:1-8 | Thoughts from Glenda

Sometimes I forget what a mess I am. And then the ugliness of my heart is revealed in its jealousy, anger, selfishness and arrogance. BUT GOD... (Side note: When you hear the words "but God..." in the bible, you know great news is coming!) BUT GOD... saved me. He takes what is old and broken and warped and makes it new. The word for this is in verse 5- regeneration. New birth. This word is used only one other time in the Bible- in Matthew 19:28 when it talks about the new world. This same kind of power that will restore the earth also redeems you. The power over failure and lack is purposed by the Father, accomplished by the Son, and enacted by the Holy Spirit.

The spirit gives life (John 6:63). A whole new nature, a whole new you, is born. We are spiritual beings, designed to be receptive to the Spirit. My default is to work out my saving on my own. But I can't save myself. And any sense of trying is like squeezing a tennis ball- when I release the pressure it goes back to the exact same shape again. I need to be transformed and this is accomplished by the very spirit of God that has taken up residence in me. And I can hardly even grasp the mercy of God that he didn't just come to know me but to indwell and abide with me.

The Holy Spirit is the power of God at work in you. Do you live in a perpetual state of openness to the Spirit? Do you ask yourself if you are open to the Spirit before and during everything you think, say, and do?

May we learn to understand and know the power of God at work in us through the Holy Spirit.



# NOTES:

# MONDAY, AUGUST 23, 2021

John 17 | Thoughts from Jeremy

Jesus paints an amazing picture of the Church! He envisions the Church partnering with the Trinity to accomplish God's purpose in the world. He sees the Church as participating in the communion the Father, Son, and Spirit enjoy. He conceives of a Church that is unified – one, just as the Father and Son are one.

These next words always catch my breath: *“Then the world will know that you sent me and that you have loved them just as you loved me”* (v.23). In other words, the single best argument for the Christian faith is the Christian community when it functions as Jesus envisioned.

These words call me to repentance: I repent of the divisions I have caused by my arrogance, certainty, and sin. These words call me to commitment: to *“make an effort to preserve the unity of the Spirit with the peace that ties you together”* (Ephesians 6:3); to build bridges and not moats; and to celebrate what we have in common in God's family, not highlight what separates us.

These words call me to faith: what could it – will it! – look like when all the barriers, divisions, and walls we've built between ourselves in God's family are fully and finally torn down in Jesus and we are one just as the Father and Son are one?



# NOTES:

# WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 25, 2021

Acts 4:23-37 | Thoughts from Matt

In Acts 4 we witness a radical example of generosity. In verse 32 we are told that this new community of believers were of one heart and soul and that no one held onto their possession as their own, but instead held everything in common. People often debate whether this is example is something that we are required to follow or if it was simply something that particular community felt compelled to do.

I think that this question misses the point. If we are going to regard a specific action as being mandatory for us, this can quickly fall into its own sort of legalism. However, this does not let us off the hook. While any specific act of generosity should not be turned into a law and seen as 'mandatory', the heart of generosity that leads to these acts is incredibly important; what this particular community did was simply the fruit of their generosity which they had already internalized.

In Philippians 2, Paul tells the church to consider others as important of themselves, and here in Acts we see that mindset at work. As foreign as this act seems in our culture, it was a very natural way of living out the mindset of Christ.

Instead of asking what amount we must give, let us allow our giving to be guided by our mutual love for each other.





# NOTES:

## FRIDAY, AUGUST 27, 2021

Hebrews 12:1-13 | Thoughts from Rosie

When I think of a race, I don't think of passive commitment. It involves effort, dedication, and determination. Endurance is needed to run that race.

This race that is set before us is something we can't do on our own. We need Jesus, and we need to keep our eyes focused on him from start to finish. When we do this, we set an example for those around us. In verse 12 it says *"take a new grip with your tired hands and stand firm on your shaky legs"*.

Although we sometimes may not feel strong enough to push on, we'll be able to accomplish it as we follow Christ and draw on his strength.

In this, we can be an example to those around us; they'll be able to see how we react to hard times, how we lean on Christ to finish our race.









# NOTES:

## TUESDAY, AUGUST 31, 2021

### Psalm 86 | Thoughts from Monica

I love the opening words of this psalm – *“Bend down, O Lord, and hear my prayer.”* Similar to a parent bending down in order to hear their toddler clearly, we get this beautiful image of God, in all of His perfect majesty, bending down to hear from one of His precious children.

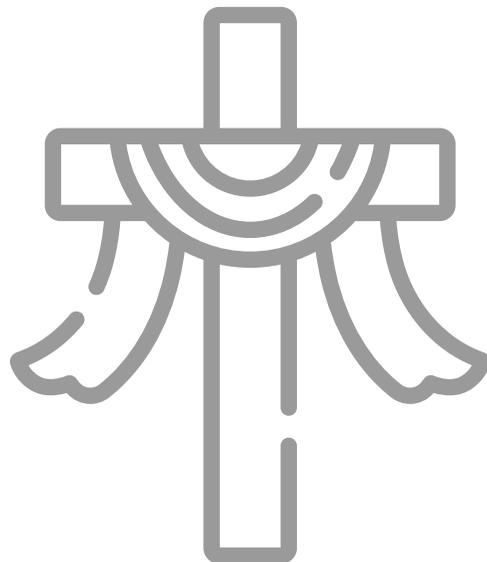
It is within this beautiful relationship that we can bring anything to God – our joys and celebrations, our hurts and pains, our requests and petitions. It is also here that we can come in confession, pouring out our sin and wrongdoing, trusting that God is faithful to forgive us.

It reminds me of when my kids were little, asking who had taken a cookie and already knowing the answer by the smear of chocolate across chubby cheeks. I already knew of the wrongdoing - I just waiting for them to come to me and ‘fess up.

This is the relationship we have with our heavenly Father - He already knows all of the things that we’ve done wrong. He is waiting for us to come in humility and confess them. Not so that He can beat us down in condemnation and punishment. Not at all!

Rather, as the psalmist reminds us, we have a Father is *“...so good, so ready to forgive, so full of unfailing love for all who ask”* (vs. 5).

Spend time with your Father today, bringing your confession in confidence of the love and forgiveness that is waiting for you.





# NOTES:

## THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 2, 2021

2 Colossians 2:6-23 | Thoughts from Pam

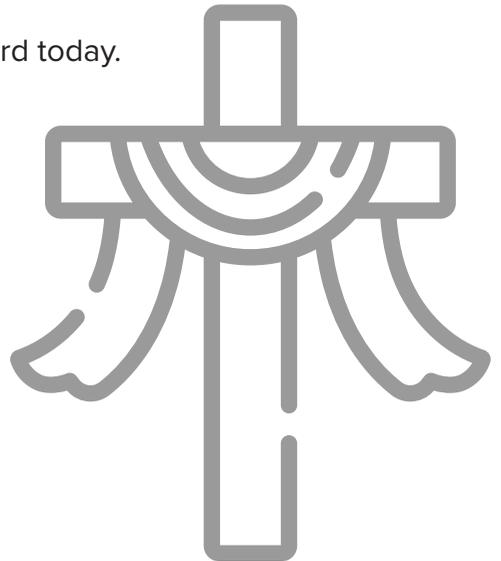
Sometimes you can hear about the forgiveness of God for your whole life and still be surprised by it. Remembering what is true about God and me caught me this week – like someone catching me by the arm and swinging me in joy.

Colossians 2:13-15 from the Message *“When you were stuck in your old sin-dead life, you were incapable of responding to God. God brought you alive—right along with Christ! Think of it! All sins forgiven, the slate wiped clean, that old arrest warrant canceled and nailed to Christ’s cross. He stripped all the spiritual tyrants in the universe of their sham authority at the Cross and marched them naked through the streets”.*

These words conjured up the image of God celebrating as we seek forgiveness and sin falls away from us – He calls us beloved and mocks the thing that tried to steal us from him.

Because this is true, I can declare I believe in the forgiveness of sins. Today, your sin, not in part but the whole, is nailed to the cross, and you bear it no more.

May your soul praise the Lord today.





# NOTES:

## SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 4, 2021

1 Corinthians 11:23-34 | Thoughts from Monica

*“For I pass on to you what I received from the Lord himself. On the night when he was betrayed, the Lord Jesus took some bread...”.*

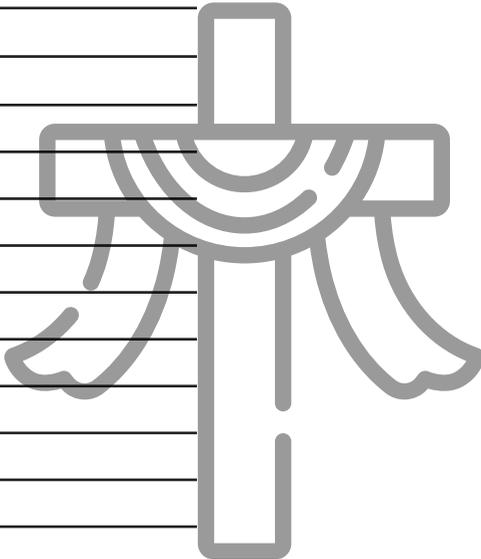
Growing up in the church, I heard these words read every time we celebrated Lord’s Supper. So often so, that it was very easy to get distracted, to tune out and just go through the motions. Even now, as an adult, I sometimes catch myself mindlessly taking the bread and the juice, just out of rote habit.

Confession can become like this as well – just a habit. Reciting a list of sins and wrongdoings, knowing that we are already forgiven, not giving much thought beyond that, simply checking another box of “being a Christian”.

However, this is where we need to go back to the words in 1 Corinthians – *“...this is my body, which is broken for you.”* Jesus willingly gave His body to be crucified so that we can go to God and ask for and receive forgiveness. Thinking of the sacrifice that Jesus made, confession becomes anything but rote. Instead, we can go to our Father in both humility and confidence, knowing that we are forgiven.

Let these words, written by Keith & Kristyn Getty, be your anthem today:

“Oh, to see my name written in the wounds, for through your suffering I am free...This, the pow’r of the cross: Christ became sin for us; took the blame, bore the wrath, we stand forgiven at the cross.”









# NOTES:

## WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 8, 2021

John 11:17-27 : Thoughts from Glenda

Martha, the “worried and upset” one, who fussed around her house, runs to meet Jesus as he comes into Bethany. Her dear brother, Lazarus, had died. For four days he had been laying in his grave. She pours out her lament and grief to her friend, Jesus, on the road that day. And this time she is the assured one. “I know he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day.” Martha knows that one day, in this far off event, hidden in this mystery, those who died would be gathered to life again.

She knew the stories of Jesus. She knew that he not only provided bread, but He is the Bread of Life. She knew that he didn't just know the way, He is The Way. And she knew that he would not only bring resurrection and life- but He is the Resurrection and the Life! The event is connected to a person. It is more than a lofty theological concept, but a personal reality. Jesus not only gives life: He is the life. When we know Jesus- we are reconnected to the very source of life. Death does not have the last word. We face life and death knowing that we will live and worship and create and work and love again.

“Because of the sin-atoning, death-defying, bondage-breaking, heart-healing, prisoner-emancipating, forgiveness-bringing, adoption-declaring, heaven-and-earth-meeting, new-creation-ushering, shalom-restoring, victory-winning, evil-overcoming, righteousness-gifting, Spirit-filling work of the cross and the resurrection, pain and suffering will never be the end of our story. All laments are answered in the lament-ending love of Jesus.”- Aubrey Sampson



# NOTES:

## FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 10, 2021

1 John 5 | Thoughts from Jeremy

God said it. That settles it.

It's not a very sophisticated or complicated argument: how can I know for sure I have eternal life (v.13)? God said it. Period. Specifically, he said eternal life was found in Jesus, therefore, if I am in Jesus, I have that life.

So the question is, do you trust God? Do you believe him? It's really that simple.

Of course, it's not just a matter of verbally agreeing with God's testimony. Belief, in the Bible, indicates commitment. Jesus explained this in a parable: the one who hears the word and obeys is the wise one who builds a house on the rock. The one who hears the word, maybe even verbally agrees with what it says, but doesn't alter his or her life in response, is the foolish one who builds a house on sand.

How would you expect someone to act if they knew they would never die? That nothing could kill them?

Are you living like that? Are you living like you have life abundantly forever that nothing and no one can take away from you?

Do you trust God?





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