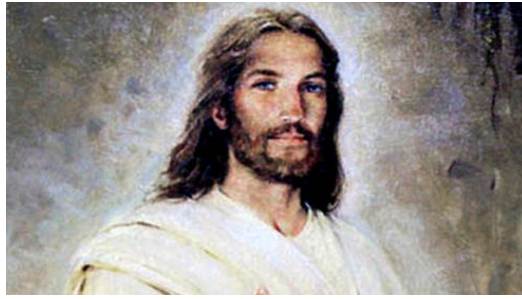


# Discovering Faith - Daily Devotionals for Lent

# Day 1

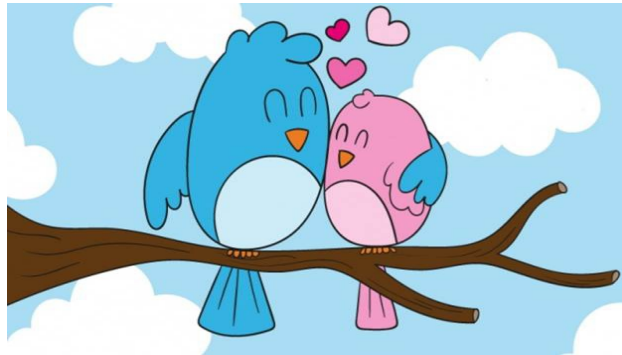


## *From Jesus with Love*

If you have found Me, you have found the secret to experiencing life to the full. I am far more than a historical character who lived and died 2,000 years ago. Because I rose from the dead, I am even more alive and active today than I was when I walked the earth. And because I live, you too can experience life and love as they were meant to be experienced, both here and now, and forever – boundless and eternal. There is no hurt that I can't heal, no sadness that I can't turn to joy, no need that I can't provide, no void that I can't fill.

I am alive today in each heart that welcomes Me. I am active and at work, always renewing, restoring and replenishing, making everything better and more beautiful whenever I am given a chance. Let Me live in you!

## Day 2



When I forgive, I am not to carry any bullets forward on the journey. I am to empty out all my explosives, all my ammunition of anger and revenge. I am not to bear any grudge.

I cannot meet this demand. It is altogether beyond me. I might utter words of forgiveness, but I cannot reveal a clear, bright, blue sky without a touch of storm brewing anywhere.

But the Lord of grace can do it for me. He can change my weather. He can create a new climate. He can "renew a right spirit within me," and in that new atmosphere nothing shall live which seeks to poison and destroy. Grudges shall die and revenge shall give place to goodwill, the strong genial presence which makes its home in the new heart.

## Day 3



When Jesus rose from the dead, His resurrection was the first phase of God's new creation, a new kind of existence—a human body was transformed by the power of God into one that is no longer affected by death, decay, and corruption. Nothing like this had ever happened! “We know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him.” (Romans 6:9, NIV)

As Christians, we too are part of God's new creation. We can look forward to the time when Jesus will return and raise our bodies as well.

## Day 4



*From Jesus with love*

The power to forgive is one of the greatest powers given to man. It's part of the nature and essence of God, and when you exercise it you assume godlike stature. You have the power to forgive and thus rise above the pettiness of mortals.

Choosing to forgive another is one of the hardest things most people ever do, especially if it's undeserved. It's hard because it's not human nature. Human nature cries out for revenge and retribution. But why get stuck in human nature?

Whether that person who wronged you deserves forgiveness or not is not the central issue. The central issue is you doing the right thing. No one really deserves forgiveness. If others have done wrong, they deserve a just punishment. But forgiveness is greater than justice. Justice is human; forgiveness is divine.

Forgive others who have wronged you, even as your heavenly Father forgives you.

## Day 5



Because of what Jesus did, we know that all He said is true: that we have salvation and eternal life, that the Holy Spirit dwells within us, that we have the promise of answered prayer, that He will guide us when we ask Him to. The separation between us and God has been bridged. We are His children, who will live with Him forever.

Because of the resurrection, we have the assurance of salvation, the ability to lead a Christ-infused life today, and the honor to live with God forever.

Let's rejoice in the significance of Easter—yesterday, today, and forever.

## Day 6



Love is like a stream. Some days it flows and rushes, for there is plenty. On other days it trickles, and you can see it bouncing against the unseen rocks. But even when love is dry and has lost its flow and lies nearly empty on the muddy bottom, there is more love to come.

We remember how Jesus loved, how He forgave, and how He reached out to show He cared. By using Jesus as the Source of love, we can fill up the stream again. Life has the extra dimension found in Jesus Christ. He is the Authority on love. Jesus loves when love is hard. He loves when love is rejected. He loves when love makes little sense. Jesus loves when others would quit. Jesus loves when others are ugly. Jesus loves when others are cold. Jesus loves when others are unworthy.

And when we feel that love has dried up, we reach out to Him, and learn to love again.

## Day 7



We don't have a Jesus on the cross; He's left the cross! We have an empty cross. "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" (1 Corinthians 15:55, KJV) We don't have a Christ in the grave; we have a live Jesus living in our hearts.

He rose in victory, joy, liberty, and freedom, never to die again, so that He could redeem us as well and prevent our having to go through the agony of death of spirit. What a day of rejoicing that must have been when He rose and realized it was all over. He had won the victory; the world was saved!



## Day 8



Jesus rose from the grave, conquering death, and in doing so, freed us from being bound only to this life. Though we presently live in a broken world, we have the promise of a perfect world to come. While we experience heartbreak and disappointment today, our tears and fears will be forever wiped away in our life after this one. While we sometimes struggle with confusion, sadness, fear, and uncertainty, when we join Him and are in His presence in heaven, we will experience joy unspeakable.

This is possible because God, who so deeply loves us and wants us to be in relationship with Him, made a plan by which we could become His children. This plan required God entering this world through a miraculous birth, and after living among us, giving His life for us on the cross—and then rising from the dead. Through the completion of His plan, we can enter into the relationship with Him that we were created for—both now and forever.

## Day 9



Is there anything more wonderful than the miracle of forgiveness and the assurance of having our mistakes forgiven? This wonderful forgiveness is for all of us. Jesus died for all of us. All we have to do is accept His forgiveness and receive Him as our Savior. "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John 1:9, KJV) That's His unqualified, unbreakable promise to you.

Jesus understands our flaws and human weaknesses, as He experienced life as a human. When He gave His life for our sins, He knew very well that we'd never get everything right, no matter how hard we tried. We can enter into that wonderful place of peace and forgiveness by regularly confessing our faults, mistakes, and sins to Him. We can find peace in His forgiveness as we humble ourselves, acknowledge our faults, and run to His outstretched arms.

## Day 10



*From Jesus with Love*

You need Me. You need what I have to give you. You need My strength, My love, My supply, My protection. I have all this for you and more. I am your life source, and because I am, your life can be wonderful, beautiful, rich, and filled with what I know will prove most important in the long run.

I will never leave you alone or comfortless. I will never leave you without guidance and direction. I will never leave you without grace and strength to fight life's battles. I will never leave you without rest and renewal after those battles. I will always provide your needs. You don't need to fear or be anxious because I, the One who loves you like no other can, have special plans for you.

## Day 11



Through His children, God is trying to show the world what He is like. Jesus said, "As the Father has sent Me, I am sending you." (John 20:21 NIV). Jesus came to love the world, and He calls us to do likewise in every facet of life. The only way that others will ever find His joy and peace and love and happiness and heaven is through us.

No matter where we are from, if we have Jesus, we are now His ambassadors and represent the King of kings, the One who runs the universe.

Even the little things you do can mean a lot. The light of your smile, the kindness of your face, the influence of your life can shed light on many and have an amazing effect on some of the people you think might be the least likely to be impressed. When they feel your love and you tell them it's God's love, they think, *Maybe Somebody up there really does love me!* It can change their whole outlook on life and give them a new start.

May we always be known by our love.

## Day 12



### *From Jesus with Love*

I love you as if you were the only one. My love is reaching out to you right now. My love, My forgiveness, and My mercy are all right there, just for you, if you will only receive them.

I love you just the way you are. I am not stacking up all your faults and failures and mistakes to hold against you. I see only the good, and I see possibilities that others do not see.

I see your every tear. I hear your every cry. I feel your every frustration, your every worry, your every burden, your every desire. I know everything about you—all your wants, all your lacks. I see straight through to your heart of hearts and all that is in it, and I deeply love you.

I long to hold you close, here on My gentle breast. I am right there by your side, and I will never, ever forsake you. I love you, just you, and here I patiently wait—for you!

## Day 13



God created us with the need to love and be loved, and He alone can satisfy the deepest yearning of every human soul for total love and complete understanding. The things of this earth can satisfy the body, but only God and His eternal love can ever fill that aching spiritual void in our hearts that He created for Himself alone. The human spirit can never be completely satisfied with anything less than utter union with the great and loving Spirit that created it.

## Day 14



"Why must I ask Jesus into my heart?" you may ask. "Why do I have to use that name? Why can't I just pray to God and find salvation that way, through His name?"

Because Jesus is the only One who came to earth and gave His life for you. Jesus said, "I am the door"—into His Father's house, the kingdom of God. "Whoever enters through me will be saved." (John 10:9, NIV). So if you want to get to Heaven, you have to walk through Jesus, the open Door.

Then what about the adherents of all the other religions in the world? Can't they be saved? Yes, they can all get saved, regardless of their religion. Even if they don't have any religion, they can still be saved—but only through Jesus.

## Day 15



One of the most marvelous things about the gift of salvation is that once you have received Jesus into your heart, He is there to stay. He has come into your life, and He will be with you forever. Jesus has said that He will never leave you nor forsake you, and that He will be with you always, even to the end of the world (Hebrews 13:5; Matthew 28:20). There is nothing you could ever say or do that would nullify these wonderful promises.

Jesus knows you're not perfect and never will be—and He loves you just the same! When He forgave you for your sins, He not only forgave your past sins but your present sins and those you will yet commit as well.



## Day 16



Jesus coming to earth, dying on the cross for us, and His subsequent resurrection forever changed the course of history. These actions allowed each of us the opportunity to accept Jesus and become part of God's family.

When Jesus told His disciples to "preach the good news to everyone," (Mark 16:15, NLT) He showed that He wants each man, woman, and child to have the opportunity to become a part of His family, to be saved from their sins, and to experience His forgiveness and reconciliation. Each person who has already received His marvelous gift, who knows what it is to live within God's family, to be forgiven for our sins, to have God's Spirit within us, will naturally want to share this with others.

We who believe in the resurrection, have been saved because of the resurrection, and will experience resurrection, should remind ourselves as we celebrate the resurrection of God the Son that we are proclaimers of the risen Christ to those who have not yet heard that "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." (John 3:16, NIV)

## Day 17



One day Satan and Jesus were having a conversation. “Yes, sir,” Satan gloated. “I just caught a whole world full of people! I set a trap and got them all!”

“What are you going to do with them?” Jesus asked.

“I’m going to have some fun!” Satan replied with glee. “I’m going to teach them how to lie and cheat and steal and kill. This is going to be great!”

“And what will you do when you’re through with them?” Jesus asked.

“Then I’ll kill them,” Satan said proudly.

“How much do you want for them?” Jesus asked.

“Oh, you don’t want those people! They aren’t any good. They’ll just hate you. They’ll cause you nothing but misery and heartbreak, and they’ll kill you in the end. You don’t want those people!”

“How much?” Jesus asked again.

Satan looked at Him and sneered. “Your LIFE!”

“DONE!”

Then Jesus paid the price.

## Day 18



Prayer is a key component of our spiritual life; it's how we communicate with God, our Creator. We can speak with Him, praise and worship Him, and tell Him our concerns, troubles, needs, and ask Him for His help, intervention, and strength. Prayer is asking for the will of God to be done, and through prayer, we listen to His voice and seek His guidance, encouragement, comfort, and instruction. Prayer is designed to be a two-way conversation, a means of developing and deepening our relationship with God.

Through prayer, we can cast all of our earthly cares upon His strong shoulders. If your heart is concerned about something, God is concerned too. As has been said, "If something is big enough to worry about, it's big enough to pray about."

## Day 19



The divine, supernatural, miraculous, infinite, marvelous love of God is love enough to forgive! God's mercy is endless, from everlasting to everlasting. His love and mercy and forgiveness and salvation never end. He never stops loving us, no matter what we do. He never rejects us or withdraws His love. He always has hope for us no matter how far we've strayed. (Psalm 103:3-14)

Even in spite of our sins and shortcomings and misdeeds and crimes, whatever they may be, the blood of Jesus covers all our sins—past, present, and future. If we will forsake our sins and turn to the Lord, our God will abundantly pardon (Isaiah 55:7). The Bible says, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us," no matter what we have done. (1 John 1:9, KJV)

## Day 20



Have you ever noticed how much of Christ's life was spent in doing kind things—in merely doing kind things? Run over it with that in view, and you will find that He spent a great proportion of His time simply in making people happy, in doing good turns to people.

What God has put in our power is the happiness of those about us, and that is largely to be secured by our being kind to them.

"The greatest thing," says someone, "a man can do for his Heavenly Father is to be kind to some of His other children." I wonder why it is that we are not all kinder than we are? How much the world needs it! How easily it is done! How instantaneously it acts! How infallibly it is remembered!

## Day 21



### *From Jesus with Love*

I understand the trying of men's hearts—the despair, the discouragement, the desperation.

I understand the pain of leaving loved ones, for first I had to leave My Father to go to Earth, and then I had to leave those that I loved so dearly on Earth to return to My Father.

I understand what it's like to feel betrayed, for one whom I had befriended betrayed Me with a kiss.

I understand fear of what lies ahead, and so I prayed, "Father, let this cup pass from Me!"

I understand what it's like to feel ridiculed and abused, for I was ridiculed and abused.

I understand pain, for I felt excruciating pain as the nails pierced My hands and My feet.

I understand what it's like to feel abandoned, for I felt abandoned by those I loved, who also loved Me. For a moment I thought that even My Father had abandoned Me.

Though My Father did not let that cup pass from Me, though one who I had loved betrayed Me, though I saw My loved ones flee from Me in time of trouble, though I was beaten and spat upon, though the nails pierced My hands and feet, though I felt My Father had abandoned Me, though I had to die an agonizing death, though it looked like a great defeat, it all brought about a great victory and great salvation—a great resurrection that changed the course of history and all eternity!

I died to save you, but I went through all the rest to understand you better.

## Day 22



Does a baby understand the love of its mother or father? No, he just feels it, accepts it, and receives it. Likewise, you don't have to understand everything about God to experience His love and salvation; all you have to do is receive Jesus, God's Son, as your Savior by asking Him into your heart.

You can do that right now if you want God's answer to all of your problems and His love and happiness to fill your heart and life with joy and with a new plan and purpose in living. He'll meet all your needs and solve all your problems. He's just that wonderful, and it's all just that simple!

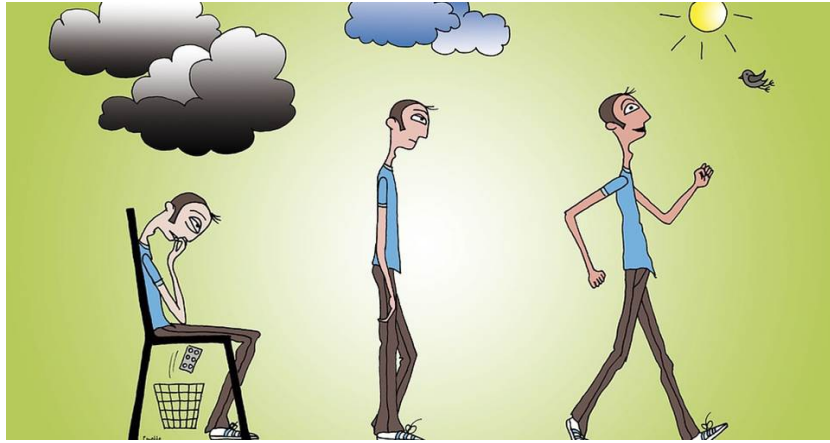
## Day 23



Jesus, I was nothing, yet You came and died for me so that You might always have me with You. You reached down to the depths for me, and I took hold of Your hand. Sometimes, though, I get so caught up in the cares of this life and the things around me that I forget You. But even when I do, You understand and keep loving me and encouraging me to come to You. You keep reminding me that You're always there, waiting for me to come to You and be refreshed and renewed. When I turn my attention to You, Your love reaches down and touches my heart, and I am renewed!



## Day 24



### *From Jesus with Love*

When I walked the earth many, many years ago, I went about doing good to all who crossed My path. I healed the sick, comforted the brokenhearted, lifted the spirits of those who were discouraged, and strengthened those who felt weak. And My love and power are the same today! I still long to touch and heal the bodies of those who suffer, and I still long to encourage the hearts of those who stoop under heavy burdens or go through difficult times. Since returning to Heaven I have touched many who lifted their hearts to Me and told Me their needs, and I want to do the same for you.

## Day 25



God's love extends to every person. Ever since He created human beings, He has loved them. No matter where they stand relationally with Him, He loves them. They may not believe He exists; they may believe He exists but hate Him; they may want nothing to do with Him; but nevertheless, He loves them. His love, kindness, and care are given to them by virtue of their being part of humanity.

Human beings were created in God's image. He loves every single one of us, and His love for us translates into loving action on His part—His care and blessings given to humankind.

## Day 26



God's love for all humankind is most clearly seen in His answer to our need for salvation. Every person falls short, (Romans 3:23) and that's why we need help in order to be reconciled to God. God, because of His love for each of us, brought forth the plan of salvation by which Jesus came to earth, lived a sinless life, and died, taking our sins upon Himself, thus making amends for us.

*God loved the world so much that he gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life. God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners. — John 3:16 NLT; Romans 5:8 NLT*

## Day 27



God's love is perfect. It is the only thing in the world that is absolutely perfect. There are a lot of things that are nice, beautiful, and wonderful, but nothing is perfect like His love. We live in an imperfect world, with imperfect humans, in imperfect conditions, but His love is what makes it possible for us to weather everything that life brings our way. He is perfect, and so is His love.

His love is free. It's not something that we have to work for, or earn, or somehow prove that we're worthy of. That's a good thing, too, because we all sin and make mistakes. If we had to earn Jesus' love, none of us would have it, because we're all men and women of similar weaknesses and human frailties. Jesus, in His divine foresight and wisdom, knew this and chose to love us with no strings attached.

## Day 28



Jesus doesn't just love us when we're happy, progressing in the school of life, or making a positive difference in the lives of others. He loves us when we're up and when we're down. He loves us when we're well and when we're sick. He loves us when we do things worthy of His praise, and He loves us even when we do things that sadden Him. To think that there isn't even one condition to His love is truly amazing!

His love is everlasting. It's not something that will be here one day and gone the next. Jesus' love will not expire or fade. It can't be stolen or forfeited. It doesn't get old with the times or go out of style. It's traditional and historic, but also modern and current. It's always. Even before we knew Him, He loved us. He has loved us from the very beginning of time, and He will love us throughout eternity.

## Day 29



### *From Jesus with Love*

When I was on earth, I told My disciples that I was going to prepare a place for us to be together forever. (John 14:2) This place is for all of you who have invited Me into your hearts and lives, and I want it to be the most wonderful place there has ever been, perfect in every way. I have also made beautiful dwelling places for you to live, so you can be comfortable and enjoy the beauties of your heavenly home. This is what is waiting for you when your earthly life is over. I can hardly wait to show you all that I've made for you and to enjoy the look on your face when I do.

You might feel you don't deserve these things. But I love you more than you could possibly know or understand, and these things are My gift to you. When you give a gift, it's not because of what someone can do for you or because they deserve it; it's because you love them. That's how I feel about you.

## Day 30



Christ has no body but yours,  
No hands, no feet on earth but yours,  
Yours are the eyes with which He looks [with] compassion on this world,  
Yours are the feet with which He walks to do good,  
Yours are the hands with which He blesses all the world.  
Yours are the hands, yours are the feet,  
Yours are the eyes, you are His body.  
Christ has no body now but yours,  
No hands, no feet on earth but yours,  
Yours are the eyes with which He looks [with] compassion on this world.  
Christ has no body now on earth but yours.

## Day 31



Dear Jesus, Thank You that You understand my heart. Thank You that I never have to worry about whether You understand or not. When I feel that I can't explain properly and I fumble over my words, or when I can't find the right words to express what I really want to say, thank You that I can just rest in Your arms and know that You make sense out of these words I speak. Thank You, Jesus, that I don't always even have to talk to You in words. You just understand everything I'm trying to say, as I pour out my heart to You.



## Day 32



None of us can really grasp how great God our Father is. He's so beyond our comprehension that He had to make Someone who could show us His love, Someone who was within our realm, Someone we could see, Someone we could feel, Someone we could experience, Someone who would bring God down to the level of our comprehension, one Man who was like Himself, whom He called His Son.

God shared His love with the whole world, but He also loves you so much that He gave His most priceless possession, the most cherished thing He had, "His only begotten Son," so that you could have everlasting life (John 3:16). He loves you dearly, more dearly than the spoken word can tell. You can never understand the love of God. It's too great; it passes all understanding (Ephesians 3:19). You just have to receive it and feel it with your heart.

## Day 33



Maybe you're wondering how you can make sure you will be able to live in such a wonderful place as heaven, once your time on earth is over. Perhaps you've been told that only those who are very good get to go to heaven. You may feel that excludes you, since you know you've made mistakes and have at times done things that were wrong, unloving, and hurtful.

Well, I have good news for you! *Anybody* can get free entrance to heaven. *Anybody* can be taken into the arms of love and receive the joy, fulfillment, and everlasting love that God wants to give each of us, both here and in the life to come—and that includes you.

Jesus paid our way by dying for our sins, and so, through simply receiving Him as our Savior, we can be sure of a place in heaven. That relieves us of the burden of having to be good enough to go to heaven, which we couldn't do anyway, because we're only human, after all. Jesus took our burden for us, and therefore all we have to do is believe and receive the gift of salvation that God wants to give us.

## Day 34



God loves you! He is your kind and loving heavenly Father who personally loves you, His own dear child, and you are in His hands. He has made this beautiful world as a home for you to live in and enjoy, and He has lovingly given you a wonderful body, mind, and heart with which to enjoy it.

Sad to say, some people have gotten the idea that God is some kind of monster who follows them around with a big stick, always ready to clobber them! But the Bible says that "God is love". (1 John 4:8, KJV) He is loving and forgiving, and the only reason He follows anyone around is in hopes that they will turn around to meet Him, so He can receive them in His open arms!

## Day 35



Jesus said that "God is a Spirit" (John 4:24, KJV). He is all-powerful, all-knowing, and everywhere-present. Even the heaven of heavens cannot contain Him (1 Kings 8:27). He is not confined to Earth or our solar system or the Milky Way galaxy or even the entire universe. He is all and in all—far beyond the limited mind of man and our human understanding!

But because He loves us and wanted to show us His love, He sent His own Son in the form of a man, Jesus Christ. Jesus was like a picture of God—"the image of the invisible God" (Colossians 1:15, KJV), to show us what God is like—and all He did was love. He talked about love and showed love and lived love, and finally, in love, laid down His life for us, to bring life, forgiveness, and eternal joy to all who would receive Him.

## Day 36



Give of yourself. As we forget ourselves and focus on meeting the needs of others and making them happy, we become conduits of God's love to those people. And as we pour out, God pours into us. "One person gives freely, yet gains even more; another withholds unduly, but comes to poverty. A generous person will prosper." (Proverbs 11:24-25, NIV)

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A central part of Jesus' last message to His disciples at the Last Supper, before He was arrested, taken to jail, beaten, and killed was: " By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." (John 13:35, NIV)

The early Christians turned the world upside down with the love of God that they found in Jesus Christ. The way the Christians lived convinced the Romans that their faith was real.

## Day 37



Through Christ's suffering on the cross, God has made provision not only for the salvation of humankind, but also for the healing of physical infirmities. "By His stripes [the wounds He received when He was whipped] we are healed" (Isaiah 53:5, KJV).

God not only *can* heal you, but He *wants* to heal you. A leper once came to Jesus and said, "Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean." Jesus touched the man and said, "I am willing; be cleansed," and immediately the man's leprosy was cleansed (Matthew 8:2-3). He's more willing to give than we are to receive. All He asks is that we honor Him with faith by believing His promises.

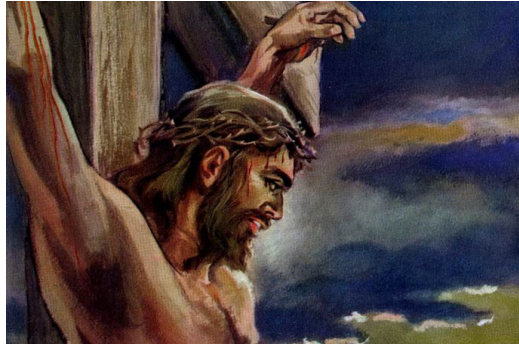
## Day 38



Why would the Lord of the universe, God in the flesh, allow Himself to be captured, falsely accused, tried and condemned, whipped, stripped, and nailed to a cross like a common criminal? The answer is simple: Because He loved you and me!

All of us at times have done wrong and been unloving and unkind to others. The Bible says, "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23, KJV). The worst thing about our sins is that they separate us from God, who is absolutely sinless and perfect. In order to bring us to God, Jesus, the sinless Son of God, took the sins of all mankind upon Himself. He took the punishment for our sins and suffered the horrible pain of death by crucifixion. He died the death of a sinner that through His sacrifice, we might find forgiveness and freedom from our sins.

## Day 39



"My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" (Matthew 27:46, NIV).

What caused Jesus the greatest agony on the cross was not our sins, because He knew that we were going to be forgiven and saved. What broke His heart was thinking that His Father had turned His back on Him. Jesus went through an experience that, thank God, we will never have to go through—not just crucifixion, not just the agony of the body, but the agony of mind and spirit, feeling that God had actually deserted Him. 'My God, My God,' He cried out, 'why have You forsaken Me?' (Matthew 27:46). Had God forsaken Him? Yes, momentarily, that He might die the death of a sinner, without God.

Jesus took upon Himself the sins of the whole world on the cross (1 Peter 2:24), and these sins temporarily separated Him from His Father. He voluntarily gave Himself to die in our place—He loves us that much!



## Day 40



Easter is a celebration of the resurrection of Jesus. It's a celebration of His defeat of death and hell and Satan. Jesus redeemed us from our sins. He lived and loved and died for us as individuals, and He's with us today in spirit just as much as He was with those He walked beside two millennia ago.

Easter is the central theme of the gospel, the key component which proves the validity of everything Jesus taught. The resurrection tells us that Jesus is the Son of God; that as believers we have salvation and forgiveness, we are God's children, and we'll be with Him for eternity in heaven.

## Hand in Hand for Eternity

Jesus, You told us, "You believe in God, believe also in Me." I believe You are the Son of God and that You died for me, rising again to conquer death. Please forgive my mistakes and shortcomings, come into my life, and hold me in Your loving care from now throughout eternity.

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