

God's Unlimited Promises to Hold On To

# UNLIMITED KINGDOM



## FROM ELIEZER TO YOU

Dear Friend

Welcome to the second edition of GNU's flagship devotional, *Unlimited*. These little booklets, produced every two months, will help you walk closer with Jesus as you discover his unlimited and unchanging promises to hold on to.

The theme of this edition is "Unlimited Kingdom", focusing on the Kingdom of God and its promises for you, with a particular focus on the love story of Calvary.

We also look forward to sharing reflections on God's "Unlimited Salvation" in our next edition, to help you know the deep and comforting assurance of salvation through Jesus Christ alone.



These *Unlimited* devotional booklets offer practical wisdom as well as opportunities to reflect, and insights on how to serve others. I look forward to hearing how these devotionals are helping you grow in Christ.

Receive this with our prayers,  
and an abundance of Kingdom  
blessings.

Grace and peace,

*Elie*

Eliezer Gonzalez  
Senior Pastor, GNU

# UNLIMITED KINGDOM

**God's Unlimited Promises to Hold On To**

## YOU WILL BE SATISFIED IN THE KINGDOM OF GOD

**Christ is the one who satisfies,  
and nothing else will do.**

*I am the bread of life: he who comes to me shall never hunger; and he who believes in me shall never thirst (John 6:35, NKJV).*

I once saw two photos. In the first one, all the possessions of a typical family in the USA were piled up on their front lawn, and it was an enormous pile! In the second photo, all the possessions of a typical family in the third world were spread out on a single blanket.

At the end of their lives, most people wish that they could have another day, week, or even another minute of time with their loved ones. What matters most is not the stuff, but the people. When you live your life in the rat race, you are never satisfied, and that tells you something: that you were never chasing the right thing to start with.

That's why Jesus tells us firstly who he is: he is the "bread of life." He is telling us that he is the Source. And then Jesus tells us what he can do for us: "he that comes to me shall never hunger; and he that believes on me shall never thirst." Christ is the one who satisfies, and nothing else will do.

Jesus tells us to put him and his Kingdom first, and then we'll have everything we need and more. Because in his Kingdom, there's always much more than enough.

▼ **ELIEZER GONZALEZ**

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**Eli's Reflection:** *Are you dissatisfied with part of your life, needing to do, achieve or receive more? If that never happened, would Jesus be enough for you? Think deeply about this, and then pray, asking Christ to be everything for you, so that you may be completely satisfied in him.*

# JESUS WAS REJECTED SO YOU WOULD BE ACCEPTED

He gave up everything  
so we might inherit everything.

God... chose to bring many children into glory. And it was only right that he should make Jesus, through his suffering, a perfect leader, fit to bring them into their salvation (Hebrews 2:10, NLT).

“My God, my God, why have you deserted me?” In this anguished cry from the Cross, we find the reason for Christ’s death. The records of time and eternity do not contain a sentence that is more full of anguish. It is not death that is the ultimate penalty for sin—it is separation from God. When God, who is the Source of life, hope, joy and peace, abandons someone, all life, hope, joy and peace depart with him. And that is hell. Apart from God, there is no future at all, only a black hole of total extinction.

Christ, who bore the sin of the world, had to experience this separation. God intended to annihilate sin forever, and so Christ, who carried our sin, was being annihilated with it. Either Christ is destroyed with our sin, or we will be. There is no alternative.

Jesus was rejected so we will be accepted. God separated himself from Jesus so that he might become one with us. That is the sacrifice that our Lord made for us. He gave up everything so we might inherit everything.

▼ **DES FORD**

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**Eli’s Reflection:** *Have you ever felt lonely—deserted and abandoned by everyone? Because of Jesus’ sacrifice, you are never truly alone, even though it may feel like it sometimes. Thank God because he is always with you—because of Calvary.*

## WE MUST BE BORN AGAIN

The most frightening aspect of Christ's words, "You must be born again," was the character of the person to whom he spoke them.

*Unless a person is born from above he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3, NET).*

Christ spoke these words to a nocturnal visitor two thousand years ago. On other occasions he expressed the same thought in the following way: "Except you be converted, and become as little children, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 18:3 AKJV). These "excepts" stand between every person and eternal life.

Consider the most frightening aspect of Christ's words, "You must be born again"; namely, the character of the person to whom he spoke them. It was not to Mary Magdalene, a lady of the night. It was not to Zacchaeus, a cheat and thief.

Christ's words were addressed to a man of spotless reputation who spoke Sabbath by Sabbath at one of the leading metropolitan churches: Nicodemus, the teacher of Israel. (See John 3:10, RV.)

Which of us would claim a character as lofty as his, or a mind as enlightened as his? Yet even Nicodemus needed to be born again. No wonder that when Wesley was asked why he preached so often on the text "You must be born again," his reply was, "Because you must be born again."

▼ **DES FORD**

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**Eli's Reflection:** *We must be born again, and this is an experience we must revisit daily. "I die daily," says the Apostle Paul. Do you die daily? Really? What can you do in your experience with Jesus, to make sure that you do?*

# JESUS TOOK YOUR SIN AND TOOK YOUR PLACE

Sin doesn't exist outside of people.  
To destroy sin, God could either destroy us,  
or transfer our sin to himself  
and then be destroyed with it in our place.

*Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done (Luke 22:42, NIV).*

In Gethsemane, Jesus confirmed his decision to take our place and die for us so we could live forever. He would go to the Cross, where he would suffer the second death in our place—a death that would be total and complete, with no hope of life beyond.

No wonder it was such a difficult decision to make; no wonder he was so distressed.

God hates sin because of the harm it does to people, families and nations, so he has made plans to destroy it. But sin doesn't exist outside of people.

Because sin exists only in people, God can destroy it only in people. There are two ways he can do this. He can either transfer our sin to himself and then be destroyed with it in our place, or he can destroy sin by destroying us.

Because of Jesus' love for you, he chose to be destroyed in your place. He would pay the full price for your sin upon the Cross. "God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8, NIV).

▼ **DES FORD**

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**Eli's Reflection:** *Because he loved you so much, Jesus chose to die in your place. What does it mean to you that Christ loved you before you loved him? What does it mean that Christ died for you even though you never knew him?*

## IN THE KINGDOM OF GOD WE LOOK AFTER OTHERS

The Kingdom of God challenges us to think in ways that are unlike us, and more like Jesus.

*In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus (Philippians 2:5, NIV).*

I was in this all-you-can-eat buffet restaurant, waiting in a queue behind two women. The first woman was serving herself from a dish with veggies, prawns and rice, and she was taking forever, just going through the dish and taking all the prawns for herself. The lady behind her was becoming more and more upset. When the first lady finished, she turned and walked back to her seat with a smug look on her face. The lady behind her was furious as she realised that all the prawns in that dish were gone!

Too often, life is like that. Too many people want to take the best for themselves and leave what's left for others. Too many people want to have money without hard work, entertainment without getting out of their seats, and relationships without commitment.

In the second chapter of Philippians, the Apostle Paul tells us how it is in the Kingdom of God—that we're not only to look after our own interests but also the interests of others. Then he tells us about the unselfishness of Jesus Christ in coming to this world and emptying himself for us.

The Kingdom of God challenges us to think in ways that are unlike us, and more like Jesus.

▼ **ELIEZER GONZALEZ**

**Eli's Reflection:** *It's easy to think about Jesus when we are at church or praying or studying the Bible. But it's not easy to keep Jesus constantly in mind when we are going about our daily activities. What can you do to help your memory, something that will stay with you and remind you to try to think about others in the same way as Jesus.*



## PROMISES TO HOLD ON TO

*Take some time to reflect on this group of devotionals.  
What promise would you especially like to hold on to?*

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▼ *In the world, success is measured in terms of legacy, what we leave behind. In God's kingdom, success is measured by what we send on ahead.*

**Ron Brackin**

## *Letter from Nigeria...*

# **SALVATION FROM TRAGEDY**

Two rival groups faced off against each other, each refusing to back down. The fighting became serious, then violent, and quickly deadly. Eight young people were murdered that day: a reminder of the fragility and value of life.

These devastating events often spawn a cycle of violence, but one group of friends came together to try to find another way through this tragedy.

Before the murders they had been gathering every week in the polytechnic library to view and discuss the Gospel messages presented, thanks to your support, on GNU's website. They enjoyed the messages, but none of them had committed their lives to Jesus. But now, in their grief, they woke up to the true meaning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

As they reached out for hope, suddenly they understood! Here was a message so powerful that grief was overlaid with joy. They invited others from the school community who had been rocked by the tragedy, and the group grew rapidly.

One of the group, Stella, says:

*We read on your website that Jesus is the way, the truth and life, and there is no other way; that all who come to Jesus, he will in no wise cast out, and God is able to save, and forgive all sin.*

Through the GNU website's spoken messages, blogs and stories, these young people realised that life and death were both meaningless without the certainty of the Gospel:

*We saw our friends die without Christ. Now 220 of us have completely surrendered our lives to Christ. Among us*



▼ **Stella and some of her friends:** *We are for Jesus and he is our Lord and Saviour..*

*were backsliders, drunkards, womanisers, idol worshippers, Muslims, and members of secret cults. But we have renounced these things and have started going to Bible-believing churches. We are for Jesus and he is our Lord and Saviour.*

From excluding everyone who didn't belong to their social group, Stella now says,

*We want to be together in heaven, and we want others to join us. We are ready to witness for Jesus, to stand and be complete soldiers and ambassadors of Christ.*

Thanks to you, 220 Christian students are now shining the light of the Gospel, and we are certain that God, with your help, will touch the lives of many more people in Nigeria.

▼ **Prayer Point:** *We praise God for his unlimited power to turn tragedy into triumph and salvation. Please pray that together we shall continue to find ways to act as God's agents for good in this world..*

# WE ARE JOINT HEIRS WITH CHRIST IN HIS KINGDOM

**Christ uncrowned himself  
that we might have a coronation of glory.**

“...joint-heirs with Christ (Romans 8:17, KJV).

The boundless realms of his Father's universe are Christ's by prescriptive right. As “heir of all things,” ... he has admitted us to claim the whole as ours, by virtue of that deed of joint-heirship that the Lord has ratified with his chosen people.

The golden streets of paradise, the pearly gates, the river of life, the transcendent bliss, and the unutterable glory, are, by our blessed Lord, made over to us for our everlasting possession. All that he has he shares with his people....

He uncrowned himself that we might have a coronation of glory; he would not sit upon his own throne until he had procured a place upon it for all who overcome by his blood... Christ deems his happiness completed by his people sharing it. “The glory which thou gavest me have I given them.” “These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.”

The smiles of his Father are all the sweeter to him, because his people share them. The honours of his kingdom are more pleasing, because his people appear with him in glory.... He delights the more in his joy, because he calls them to enter into it.

▼ **CHARLES SPURGEON**

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**Eli's Reflection:** *To get the context of today's Bible verse, prayerfully read and meditate on Romans 8:14–19. Consider how amazing is this destiny that God has chosen for you! Pick up the phone today and share this Good News with someone you know!*

# WHEN IT SEEMS GOD IS NOT THERE, HE IS

**Tears are often the birth pangs of greatness.**

**“***I am glad for your sake that I was not there (John 11:15, NET).*

Christ was glad because he had a bigger plan. He raised Lazarus from the dead to encourage all who would lose loved ones in death, and he gave encouragement to the bereaved of all ages.

Perhaps Christ is still saying, in some of the situations in our lives, “For your sake I am glad I was not there.” Perhaps he has a much bigger plan than the one we would thrust upon him immediately.

This we know: our God does all things well. Our perspective is so cramped, and we see but dimly.

God isn’t always to be perceived just in the light and glory. He’s also in the darkness. According to Scripture, justice and righteousness are the foundation of his throne, but clouds and darkness are round about him (Psalm 97:2). The stars shine brighter in the darkest nights.

The Bible tells us we are never alone in the darkness. There is One who holds our hand, a very present help in trouble.

We see darkly, we stumble, and we wonder in our pain. But when we see our God—who loves supremely, who is there for us, and who cares—then we realise that tears are often the birth pangs of greatness.

▼ **DES FORD**

**Eli’s Reflection:** *God has a bigger plan for you that you can’t fully see—a plan stretching into eternity. Are you willing to submit to his eternal plan, even though it may mean going through darkness and tears? Take this opportunity to surrender your life completely to God in prayer.*

# CHOOSE THE RIGHT THOUGHTS

**My eternal destiny and all I can influence  
should interest me more than  
all the temporary tinsel  
of human experience.**

*The end of all things is near. Therefore be alert and of sober mind so that you may pray. Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins (1 Peter 4:7–8, NIV).*

Seeing life as a brief probationary period to prepare for the hereafter, helps to place all things in right proportion. My eternal destiny and all I can influence should interest me more than all the temporary tinsel of human experience. Christ has suffered that we might have eternal happiness. Shall we be so demented as to neglect something so valuable?

When we cherish such reflections, they enable us to turn the kaleidoscope of thought aright. Against the backdrop of Calvary and eternity, everything in this life assumes a new shape. When the Cross is engraved in our hearts, beneath its shadow, the pride, the vanity and folly of many of life's pursuits and values become apparent. Sensing that "out of the heart are the issues of life" and remembering his crown of thorns, our very imaginations will be dedicated to God.

When we do this, to crucify vain thoughts of pride, impurity, selfish ambition, irritability and complaint, takes priority among our concerns. In thinking uselessly and aimlessly, time is lost, no less than in speaking that way. The account we shall render for each shall not be very different. It is certain that in choosing my thoughts, I choose my habits and my destiny.

▼ **DES FORD**

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**Eli's Reflection:** *What do I think about most: "my eternal destiny" or "the temporary tinsel of human experience"? What habits determine my thinking patterns? Is there one habit I need to remove or modify? What will be my first step?*

# CHRIST'S MIRACLES AND PARABLES TEACH JUSTIFICATION IN HIM ALONE

The prodigal confesses, as must every sinner, "I am not worthy," but the Father still receives him.

*To the one who does not work but trusts God who justifies the ungodly, their faith is credited as righteousness (Romans 4:5, NIV).*

Justification concerns the provision of that righteousness which is alien to us and found in Christ alone. It is systematically presented as a doctrine in Romans, but it is found throughout the whole of Scripture. Even the miracles and parables of Christ set it forth.

For example, the leprous, the blind, the deaf, the dumb and the palsied, came just as they were, but the word of Christ declared them whole. They came just as they were, but they did not remain just as they were. Contact with Christ made the difference.

The lost are pictured as helpless sheep, forfeited coins and degraded sons. Only loving grace made the rescue possible. The shepherd found the sheep, the woman found the coin, and the memory of the Father's love drew the prodigal. The prodigal confesses, as must every sinner, "I am not worthy," but the Father receives him nevertheless.

Justification is a declaring righteous, not a making righteous. But God does not pronounce the leper clean and leave him a leper. He does not pardon the rebel and then leave him to carry on his rebellion. The 'fruit of the Spirit' is the evidence that we have been 'born' of the Spirit.

▼ **CHARLES E. JEFFERSON**

**Eli's Reflection:** *Think about your favourite parable or miracle of Jesus. How does it teach the truth of justification by Christ alone and through grace alone? Write it down so you don't forget it, and share it with your church group.*

# THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS NOT JUST A FUTURE HOPE

Only those who live profitably and joyfully  
in Christ's Kingdom now will ever come to see  
the Kingdom of Glory.

*The thief's purpose is to steal and kill and destroy.  
My purpose is to give them a rich and satisfying life  
(John 10:10, NLT).*

Jesus told a story about ten young ladies who were invited to a wedding (Matthew 25:1–13). Five of them focused only on the future wedding, forgetting to bring enough oil for the time they had to wait; but the other five focused on the 'now' as well as the 'future', bringing enough oil for both.

There's a kind of Christian who is always miserable and gloomy, hoping for God to bring better times. Some of these Christians try to trace every detail of Bible prophecy, to work out exactly how the end will come. But the Bridegroom will surprise us all.

Jesus has promised us that things will be better in the future. But if that's all we have, and we are just waiting in misery for that day, then we are like the five girls without oil.

The Kingdom of Heaven is not only a future hope; it is also a present reality. Only those who live profitably and joyfully in Christ's Kingdom now will ever come to see the Kingdom of Glory.

▼ **ELIEZER GONZALEZ**

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**Eli's Reflection:** *What is your perspective as a Christian? Are you enjoying Christ's Kingdom blessings now, or are you gritting your teeth and holding on for something beyond the grave? List some things that are holding you back from enjoying Christ's Kingdom blessings today. Find a Bible promise that will help you make it a reality in your life.*



## PROMISES TO HOLD ON TO

*Take some time to reflect on this group of devotionals.*

*What promise would you especially like to hold on to?*

[illegible]

I will place no value on anything I have or may possess except in relation to the kingdom of Christ.

**David Livingstone**

## TO RECEIVE THE KINGDOM WE MUST PUT JESUS FIRST

**Jesus must either be first of all, or nothing at all.**

*You cannot become my disciple without giving up everything you own (Luke 14:33, NLT).*

I've sometimes been all excited about business opportunities that promise to make me a millionaire. And then my excitement has been totally deflated when the reality hasn't lived up to the promises.

Jesus offers us the best deal ever: eternal life in the Kingdom of Heaven. In the Bible there's a story about a rich young man who got all excited about this and ran up to Jesus, fell on his knees, and asked, "What must I do to inherit eternal life?" (Mark 10:17). When Jesus told him to sell everything he had and to give it to the poor, the man went away sad, his excitement completely deflated. His attitude towards money stood in the way of the blessings that Jesus could give him.

Jesus wasn't telling us that every one of us has to go and sell everything and give it to the poor. Instead, he was talking about what the attitude of our hearts must be if we want eternal life. We must absolutely put Jesus and the priorities of his Kingdom first.

If there is anything in our lives or in our hearts that is standing in the way of our relationship with him and his Kingdom agenda, we must give it up. Jesus must be either first of all, or nothing at all.

▼ **ELIEZER GONZALEZ**

**Eli's Reflection:** *Consider your attitude to money and possessions. I encourage you to make a prayerful gift to a worthy charity or Christian ministry. Challenge your heart by making the gift of such a size that it hurts. (Note: If you or your family have personal and pressing needs, you should make sure you can meet these first).*

# GOD HEARS HIS CHILDREN

Jesus has an open door policy; it's called "prayer."

*When you pray, I will listen (Jeremiah 29:12, NLT).*

It seems that the more connected we are with the world, the more disconnected we become from each other. People wander around, lost in a world of noise, and they wonder if anyone listens. We can upgrade our phones but we never seem to be able to upgrade our communication.

Sometimes, we think of God as being distant in that kind of way. But in the Kingdom of God, it works differently. Yes, God hears our prayers, but it gets even better than that! God says, "Before they call I will answer; while they are still speaking I will hear" (Isaiah 65:24, NIV).

In the Kingdom of God we are connected with him all the time, so that even before we call him, he answers, and he knows what we've said even before we've finished saying it. There's no communication system on earth that can compare to that! That should make you feel very safe in the Kingdom of God, whatever dangers you may face.

It's kind of like God's own ultra-advanced Kingdom-technology that he makes available to you. You don't even need a contract. It's all been paid for by Jesus Christ, so you get it for free.

Jesus has an open-door policy: it's called prayer.

▼ **ELIEZER GONZALEZ**

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**Eli's Reflection:** *Find a fellow believer in Jesus in the coming week with whom you can talk about prayer. Discuss these kinds of questions: How real is prayer to you? How would you feel if you didn't have prayer in your life? Swap experiences of how you have been blessed by prayer.*

## SIN DOES NOT RULE IN YOUR LIFE

**The Christian sees in every transgression  
the nail and the spear that pierced Christ.**

*For sin shall no longer be your master, because you are not under the law, but under grace (Romans 6:14, NIV).*

The Christian sees in every transgression the nail and the spear that pierced Christ. Indeed, nothing less than the revelation of the wickedness of the human heart and the love of the divine one as given by the Cross could break the fascination of evil for depraved humanity. The gospel certainly does not make light of sin.

But the way of conquest over sin is the way of indirection. The power of sin is annulled in experience as its guilt is taken away by faith in Christ's atonement.

The Christian sees that his sins were crucified with the Saviour, and nailed to his Cross. As we see our complete identity with our Representative, sin ceases to reign in us. But no sin is ever crucified either in heart or life until it is first pardoned in conscience. Here are the words of Paul:

*We are those who have died to sin; how can we live in it any longer? ... For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body ruled by sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin.... In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus. (Romans 6:2,6,11, NIV).*


▼ **DES FORD**

**Eli's Reflection:** *Think about a sin you commit. It is "the nail and the spear which crucified Christ." How painful is that to you? If you want that sin's hold over you to be taken away, you first need its guilt removed from your life. Confess that sin before the Lord, repent, and receive his forgiveness.*

# CHRIST GIVES YOUR LIFE MEANING

**We own nothing.**

**We are but stewards of the gifts of his grace.**

 *I am the way and the truth and the life (John 14:6, KJV).*

Unless we are first clear as to the meaning of life, why we are here and where we are going, there is neither sense nor meaning for the sorrows of life. How you and I think of death makes all the difference to how we live.

Only in Christ does human life find meaning. He did not idly say, “I am ... the life” and “I am ... the truth”. He is the truth about all things, including life and death. If we are to be raised from the dead as he was, we must live in the spirit that he lived.

But there's more than that. All the gifts of this life are the result of Christ's Cross. It was his volunteering in Eden to take man's place, his guilt and punishment, which saved the race from extinction there and then.

Thus, everything we know that is good—life itself, food, drink, the air we breathe, the clothes we wear, our loved ones and friends—all are stamped with the Cross of Calvary which bought them.

Therefore, we own nothing. We are but stewards of the gifts of his grace, and all should be used to his glory. To live as though we were our own, is to live and die as fools.

▼ **DES FORD**

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**Eli's Reflection:** *Look at your money and possessions, and remind yourself: “These aren't mine. They belong to God.” Look at your family and think, “You aren't mine. You belong to God.” Pray, acknowledging God as the Sovereign owner of the entirety of who you are and what you have.*

# GOD'S KINGDOM IS A KINGDOM OF FREEDOM

With Christ there is perfect satisfaction  
and overwhelming joy.

*Through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life  
has set you free from the law of sin and death  
(Romans 8:2, NIV).*

The Apostle Paul's Epistle to the Romans is a great letter about freedom. In the first five chapters, it talks of our freedom from the wrath of God. Then in chapter six, it talks about our freedom from the dominion of sin. In the seventh chapter, it is saying we are free from law as a covenant. It is no longer a method to be used to gain "brownie points" with God and to assure us of our righteousness. Then, in the following chapter, Paul says we are free from death.

Read the last verses of each of these chapters and we find in each case that the freedom is "through Jesus Christ our Lord".

The chief cause of unhappiness is not from outside but from inside, from unsatisfied desires and passions. The only free person in the world is one who *wants* to do what he or she *ought* to do.

When we really come to believe that God loves us, and that he loved us enough to die for us in Christ, then everything changes. With that glorious faith, the Holy Spirit comes into our lives and he writes the law of love in our hearts so that now we want to do what we ought to do. With Christ there is perfect satisfaction and overwhelming joy.

▼ **DES FORD**

**Eli's Reflection:** *Think about this: "When we really come to believe that God loves us, ...everything changes." We tend to blame others (true, they are not guiltless), but Des challenges us to look inside for the root causes of our unhappiness. Could this revelation bring freedom to you?*

## PROMISES TO HOLD ON TO

*Take some time to reflect on this group of devotionals.*

*What promise would you especially like to hold on to?*

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▀ *Knowing we will be with Christ forever far outweighs our burdens today! Keep your eyes on eternity!* **Billy Graham**

*Letter from Rwanda...*

## **EMMA FINDS GOD'S CHILDREN IN THE MARKETPLACE**

Any time is a good time to tell people about the Gospel of Jesus Christ! Evangelist Emma, the voice of GNU radio in Rwanda, lives that principle every day. And thanks to your faithful support, the Gospel is spreading on the radio waves to remote areas of Rwanda.

Emma also follows the instruction of Jesus to “go out to the roads and lanes and urge them to come, so my house may be full”. In the marketplace at Nyamirambo, Kigali, Emma spotted a group of boys absorbed in sorting through the garbage, searching for scraps of food. She says:

*I had a strong feeling within that I should do something for them, so I spoke to them, took them shopping for food, and invited them home for lunch.*

Emma shared her food and gave them shoes and clothes, and of course she told them about the origin of love and care: Jesus Christ and the Gospel. Over time, she has fostered an ongoing friendship with these kids. Just recently thirteen boys told Emma they want to be baptised, having accepted the Gospel they have seen as well as heard through Emma's words and actions.

Then there was the ‘chance’ encounter in a line of bank customers waiting to be served. Emma had a copy of *Jesus Only* in her hand, as she often does. She tells how the man behind her in the queue “asked if he could read a little bit. I took advantage of the situation to tell him what it says in the book and how Jesus Christ loves him.”





▼ **Evangelist Emma** gives physical as well as spiritual food to this group in Kigali, Rwanda..

Emma gave this Muslim gentleman a copy of *Jesus Only*, and continued to share the Gospel with him. Its message has changed his life and he has now asked to be baptised.

Gakenke is another remote town in Rwanda where the Gospel has become established, thanks to your support of GNU radio. A growing number of people gather in the home of a local pastor to listen to the programme, read the Bible, and pray together. Several people have accepted Jesus as a direct result of these meetings, and they too have asked to be baptised.

We thank God for committed people such as Emma, whose dynamic, practical enthusiasm for the Gospel shines a light in the darkness. And we thank God for generous people like you who make it possible to send the message by radio to people who otherwise would not hear it.

▼ **Prayer Point:** *Give thanks that no place is too remote for the message of the Gospel. Pray for more opportunities to share the Good News with these precious people.*

# HOW FORGIVENESS WORKS IN THE KINGDOM

**In the Kingdom of Heaven,  
forgiven people forgive.**

*Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you (Ephesians 4:32, NIV).*

I once owed a friend a whole lot of money, and I knew I couldn't pay it back. I lay awake at night tossing and turning, and just thinking about it. What did this friend do? He signed a paper called a "debt forgiveness" and he gave it to me, so I wouldn't worry about it again. I slept better after that!

Jesus said that the Kingdom of Heaven is like a man who owed an impossible amount of money (Matthew 18:23–35). And the man to whom he owed it, incredibly, forgave him the whole debt. But then the man in the story failed to forgive another guy who owed him only a few dollars!

Every one of us has failed to live the kind of way that God wants us to live. It's as if we owed a debt to God. We are all sinners.

But that's not the worst thing in the world. The worst thing in the world is if we reject the forgiveness that God offers us through Jesus Christ. And how we treat others will show whether we have accepted or rejected God's forgiveness.

That's the moral of Jesus' story: in the Kingdom of Heaven, forgiven people forgive.

▼ **ELIEZER GONZALEZ**

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**Eli's Reflection:** *Would those who most need your forgiveness be able to see that you belong in the Kingdom of Heaven based on how you have forgiven them? If you find it difficult to forgive, I encourage you to find someone to talk to, someone who can help you with this situation.*

# CHRIST HAS SET US AMONG PRINCES

**Communion with Jesus is a richer gem  
than ever glittered in a king's crown.**

*He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth  
the needy out of the dunghill; that he may set him  
with princes (Psalm 113:8, paraphrased by Spurgeon).*

Our spiritual privileges are of the highest order. "Among princes" is the place of select society. "Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ." Speak of select society, there is none like this! "We are a chosen generation, a peculiar people, a royal priesthood"...

The child of God has free access to the inner courts of heaven. "For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father." "Let us come boldly," says the apostle, "to the throne of the heavenly grace."

Among princes there is abundant wealth, but what is the abundance of princes compared with the riches of believers for "all things are yours, and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's"...

Princes, again, have special honour. ...[But] what is human grandeur to this: "He hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus"?...

Communion with Jesus is a richer gem than ever glittered in a king's crown. Union with the Lord is a coronet of beauty outshining all the blaze of imperial pomp.

▼ **CHARLES SPURGEON**

**Eli's Reflection:** *Do you believe that God loves to take people like you and turn you into a prince or princess in his Kingdom? Here's an idea: design a T-shirt that identifies you as a prince or a princess in the Kingdom of Heaven, have it printed, and wear it with pride!*

## THE WOUNDS OF JESUS BRING PEACE

**There is only one place of peace,  
and that's in the wounds of Jesus.**

*Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" After he said this, he showed them his hands and side (John 20:19–20, NIV).*

Please note the meaning of Jesus' earliest words to his disciples after his resurrection. His first word, "Peace," reminds us of the many "fear nots" of the gospel. At the birth of Jesus, the angels come to the shepherds and say, "Fear not, we bring you good tidings of great joy that will be to all people." When the disciples are on the sea in the storm, Jesus appears and says, "Fear not." When the stone is rolled away from the tomb, the angel says, "Fear not, he is not here for he is risen."

There are three hundred and sixty-five "fear nots" in Holy Writ, one for every day of the year. When Jesus says, "Peace," he's saying the same thing.

Notice the grounds on which Jesus can say to all of us guilty men and women: "Peace be unto you." The answer is, "He showed them his hands and his feet." In the wounds of Jesus Christ, and there only, can peace be found—in the awareness that all our sins have been paid for, in the assurance that all guilt has been wiped out for those who believe, for he has endured all that the broken law calls for.

There is only one place of peace, and that's in the wounds of Jesus.

▼ **DES FORD**

**Eli's Reflection:** *I have discovered this to be true for myself, have you? If you are facing trouble in your life and would like to understand this better, find a Christian pastor or teacher and make a time to speak and pray together, to find out how the wounds of Jesus can bring peace to your life.*

# CHRIST SOLVES THE PROBLEM OF EXISTENCE

Unless we are right with God,  
we cannot accept ourselves;  
and if we cannot accept ourselves,  
we cannot accept our neighbour.

*We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God  
(2 Corinthians 5:20, NIV).*

Don't let anyone tell you that Christianity and religion are irrelevant. The most significant fact in your existence and mine is that old-fashioned concept called 'sin'. Human life is happy or unhappy, fruitful or unfruitful, significant or insignificant, because of its relationship, not to things, but to this distinctive: are we doing what we know to be right? There's nothing in this world that deals with sin effectively except the Gospel!

What makes life matter is friendship, love, fellowship, honesty, purity and truthfulness. You can't cut them up, put them in a parcel and send them through the mail. They are all intangibles. But they are the things that make life significant.

Our present existence is characterised by joy or sorrow according to our love relationships with our Creator, our brother, sister, wife, husband, father, mother, children, and the people with whom we work. And only the Gospel can make these relationships altogether right. Think of it this way: primarily we have only three relationships—with ourselves, our neighbour and our God. Unless we are right with God, we cannot accept ourselves; and if we cannot accept ourselves, we cannot accept our neighbour.

▼ **DES FORD**

**Eli's Reflection:** *Ask yourself these three questions:*

*1) Can you truly accept your neighbour? 2) Can you truly accept yourself? 3) Do you truly believe that God accepts you? Having considered these big questions, are you comfortable with your answers? What can you do about it?*

## THERE'S NO DIFFERENCE BETWEEN US IN THE KINGDOM

**There are no first or second-class seats  
at the foot of the Cross.**

*“There is no difference ... the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him (Romans 10:12, NIV).*

Albert Einstein once said, “I speak to everyone in the same way, whether he is the garbage man or the president of the university.” Although we’re all individuals, there’s some good advice here.

I’ve made friends with many different people around the world, and one thing I have learnt is that people everywhere are similar. We all have the same dreams; the same things make us happy, and the same things make us sad.

The Bible also tells us that there’s basically no difference between us all. There are two verses that talk about this.

One says, “There is no difference, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:22-23). That’s bad news. The other verse says, “There is no difference ... the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him” (Romans 10:12). And that’s really good news!

The blessing that the Lord has for us all is the forgiveness of sin and the gift of eternal life. This is his gift for all who believe. This underscores our equality in the Kingdom of Heaven. There are no first or second-class seats at the foot of the Cross.

▼ **ELIEZER GONZALEZ**

**Eli’s Reflection:** *Unfortunately, it is simply part of fallen human nature to be prejudiced against anyone who is different. I encourage you to challenge yourself by befriending someone you consider very different to yourself. Choose to share the love of God without bias or prejudice.*

## PROMISES TO HOLD ON TO

*Take some time to reflect on this group of devotionals.*

*What promise would you especially like to hold on to?*

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the page. On the right side, there is a light gray triangular area that appears to be a shadow or a design element, sloping upwards from the bottom edge towards the top right corner.

► *If you have not chosen the Kingdom of God, in the end it will make no difference what you have chosen instead.* **William Law**

## MAKE THE KINGDOM CHOICE

When you honour others above yourself,  
you're honouring Jesus,  
who chose you even above all of heaven.

*For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love, he predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will... (Ephesians 1:4–6, NIV).*

Have you ever had a straight-out choice between something nice and something not so nice? I often travel overseas with a colleague, who offers me a choice of rooms. Usually, one room is much more appealing than the other.

I try to make “Abraham’s Choice,” and I leave the better room for my friend. What’s Abraham’s Choice? That refers to the story of Abraham in the Bible. When his nephew Lot offered him the choice of land for his sheep, Abraham left the best land for his nephew.

The original “Abraham’s Choice” was made by God, who could have chosen to remain in heaven, but instead he came to this earth to be right here with us. He chose to be one of us. He chose to die to heal our broken lives. When we know that God always has something better for us, it becomes easier to give what is better to others. Abraham knew that God had a Kingdom prepared for him. That’s why “Abraham’s Choice” is the Kingdom choice.

It’s all about honouring others above yourself. When you do that, you’re honouring Jesus, who chose you even above all of heaven.

▼ **ELIEZER GONZALEZ**

**Eli’s Reflection:** *Life presents us with many opportunities to make Abraham’s Choice. Be alert for an opportunity to make a choice that blesses someone else at your expense. It’s what the Kingdom of Heaven is all about!*



# JESUS IS THE HEART OF CHRISTIANITY

**The heart of Christianity is not a creed,  
but a person—Jesus Christ.**

*“Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away (Matthew 24:35, NIV).”*

Christ is the only person who ever lived who claimed to be God, and yet was considered sane by the best of his generation. His influence was greater than all other teachers.

What other teacher ever dared to forecast that his teachings would last forever? Jesus declared, “Heaven and earth will pass away, but my Words will never pass away” (Matthew 24:35), and every day brings fresh proof of the truth of this.

Each new generation finds in Jesus’ teaching what is new, fresh and inspiring. As we look across the centuries, we see how his Words have passed into laws, into church doctrines, into proverbs, and into words of comfort and support, but they have never passed away.

Jesus said, “I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself” (John 12:32, NIV). This claim shows that the inner life and the unifying factor of Christianity would be a person, not a philosophy, and that person is the carpenter of Nazareth.

Usually in institutions and religion, we find at the core a set of beliefs, not a person. The heart of Christianity is not a creed, but a person—Jesus Christ.

▼ **DES FORD**

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**Eli’s Reflection:** *Take a moment to think about what is special about Jesus Christ in your life. Thank Christ for these things, and then ask him to show you one person today with whom you can share this wonderful news.*

## THE WORD OF JESUS IS MIRACULOUS

**Christ's transforming Word  
is as strong and efficient  
as his actual presence.**

*Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did among you through him, as you yourselves know (Acts 2:22, NIV).*

The Gospel of John records seven miracles that Jesus performed. These illustrate the transforming power of Jesus in our lives.

In these miracles, we find transformation from sadness to gladness, from disease to health, from paralysis to abundant energy, from hunger to fullness, from anxiety to tranquillity, from darkness to light, from death to life. In these miracles, we are given a picture of the transformation that takes place in the life of every person who comes to Jesus. These miracles reveal that all things are under the control of Jesus.

The main point for each of us is that Christ's transforming Word is as strong and efficient as his actual presence. Without touching the water in the stone jars at the wedding in Cana, Christ, with a word, turned it into wine. Later, he spoke a word at Cana and healed a boy at Capernaum. And that same word called a dead man from his grave.

That word is still available to accomplish a miracle of salvation in the life of even the weakest of believers who calls out to Christ in faith.

▼ **DES FORD**

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**Eli's Reflection:** *Are you calling out to Christ in faith today? All power belongs to Christ. I invite you to spend some time thanking Jesus for his power, for his promises to you; then claim the powerful, transforming Word of Christ for yourself or for someone whom you love.*

# HOW THE CROSS OF JESUS SHOULD GUIDE YOUR LIFE

When we, like Jesus,  
consent to crucify our selfishness  
and sacrifice ourselves for others,  
we begin to truly live.

“And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to Myself (John 12:32, NASB).”

Jesus answers the question “How shall we live?” Only the principle of the Cross of Jesus can rightly guide our hearts, minds and wills. When we, like Jesus, consent to crucify our selfishness and sacrifice ourselves for others, we begin to truly live. There is no other way.

Your response to Jesus' death for you will determine your destiny. If you accept his sacrifice on your behalf, you will be given immortality when Jesus returns. If you reject his sacrifice on your behalf, you will be denied eternal life on that day.

The Judgement that takes place when Jesus returns will not decide your destiny; you decide your own destiny when faced with the Cross. The Judgement that takes place when Jesus comes will bestow on you the destiny that you chose when you decided to accept or reject Jesus as your Lord and Saviour.

The Bible says, “Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed...” (John 3:18, NIV).

▼ **DES FORD**

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**Eli's Reflection:** *Sit down in a comfortable place or go for a walk and think about the meaning of the Cross. Reflect on how you are living your life right now. Ask yourself these questions: “Am I living in selfishness?” “Am I living a life of self-sacrifice for others?”*

## JESUS LOOKS AFTER YOU

When God looks at us,  
he sees us wrapped in the robe of righteousness  
that our Saviour has placed around us.

*As a father has compassion on his children,  
so the Lord has compassion on those who fear him;  
for he knows how we are formed,  
he remembers that we are dust  
(Psalm 103:13–14, NIV).*

John chapter 17 records the prayer that Jesus prayed as the shadow of his crucifixion fell upon him. The amazing thing about this prayer is that Jesus is looking forward to the Cross as the place where he will be exalted, where the Father will be glorified, and where salvation will be provided for the world.

In this prayer, Jesus is setting himself apart for the sacrifice, during which he is both the officiating priest and the sacrificial lamb. He prays also for his followers. “They have obeyed your Word”, he said to the Father (verse 6). These fallible, erring men were credited with Jesus’ own perfection. So it is with us.

When God looks at us, he sees us wrapped in the robe of righteousness that our Saviour has placed around us.

Christ prays that the Father will look after and keep all who put their faith in him. We can’t keep ourselves, but God’s hand on our shoulder is that of a loving brother. He will never let us go. We can never be lost while we cling to Jesus and seek to be like him.

▼ **DES FORD**

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**Eli’s Reflection:** *Perhaps you are going through a difficult time right now. Thank Christ that he will never let you go. Thank him that you can never be lost while you trust in Jesus. What would your life look like if you always acted on the basis of these truths?*

## PROMISES TO HOLD ON TO

*Take some time to reflect on this group of devotionals.*

*What promise would you especially like to hold on to?*

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■ *Jesus does not give recipes that show the way to God as other teachers of religion do. He is himself the way. Karl Barth*

# JESUS CAUSES YOU TO BEAR FRUIT

**A Christian can bear no greater fruit  
than the fruit of love.**

*This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit,  
showing yourselves to be my disciples (John 15:8, NIV).*

Jesus said: "I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful. ... Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me" (John 15:1–4, NIV).

Pruning is painful but the result is wonderful. When God wants to prune away things from your life that do not produce fruit for his kingdom, don't resist him.

The best Christians—those who are full of peace and joy—are those who let God prune useless and unnecessary things from their lives.

Those who have demonstrated that they have received the crucified Christ by taking the bread and wine, now walk in the power of the Spirit of Jesus. They bear much fruit.

There is no such thing as a true Christian who does not bear fruit. And a Christian can bear no greater fruit than the fruit of love.

▼ **DES FORD**

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**Eli's Reflection:** *Are you going through a pruning process right now? Rather than resisting this process, ask God to keep you faithful, and ask him to produce beautiful fruit in your life.*

# JESUS CALMS YOUR STORMS

Observe the power of the Word of Christ.

If we cling to it, trust it, obey it,  
that same power will work for us,  
stilling every storm.



*What kind of man is this? Even the winds and the waves obey him! (Matthew 8:27, NIV).*

Jesus' miracle stilling the storm on the Sea of Galilee (Matthew 8) is also a parable of spiritual events.

Into every life, storms and havoc intrude, threatening to undo us. Usually we battle with the storms as though we were on our own, forgetting that there is One who can help us. But if we call upon him, he will answer wonderfully.

Observe the power of the Word of Christ. By it he created heaven and earth, cast out demons, calmed the sea and raised the dead. His Word was always with power, and if we cling to it, trust it, obey it, that same power will work for us, stilling every storm.

Usually the inward storm of fear, doubt and bewilderment is worse than the outward blast. But here again the Word of Christ is the answer. "For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but one of power, love, and self-discipline" (2 Timothy 1:7, ISV).

"Faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word about Christ" (Romans 10:17, NIV).

▼ **DES FORD**

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**Eli's Reflection:** *What storms in your life need to be calmed? What are the things that make you fearful? Find a quiet place and ask God to say the Word and still your life's turbulence.*

## JESUS SHOWS US THE LOVE OF GOD

**We may deserve God's judgements,  
but we cannot stop his love.**

*This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him (1 John 4:9, NIV).*

Very close to the end of his public ministry, Jesus speaks sad words to the Jerusalem that has rejected him: "I have often wanted to gather your people, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings. But you wouldn't let me. And now your temple will be empty of my presence" (taken from Matthew 23:37-39).

Surely this is the sweetest word of divine pity ever spoken over a corrupt religion. We may deserve his judgements, but we cannot stop his love. There is always love for us in one heart—his. He is always there to help us if we will seek him.

Jesus thus reveals the heart of God and the essence of his gospel, which is love for those who are lost. We can trust a weeping Saviour; his tears should banish our fears.

What a beautiful picture Jesus gives us at the end of Matthew 23. When there is danger, the chicks have the mother's wing folded over them. They are perfectly safe, perfectly comfortable and perfectly happy. It is our privilege to be like them, and we can be, if we have a true picture of God.

▼ **DES FORD**

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**Eli's Reflection:** *Take a moment to recall what you were told about what God when you were young. How has that shaped your thinking about God today? Reread the Gospel of Mark to reframe your thinking about what God is really like—in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ.*



# JESUS WASHES AWAY YOUR SIN

Jesus got up from the festivity of heaven,  
removed his outer glory,  
wrapped himself in humanity,  
and bowed down to wash away  
the dirt of our daily walk.

*Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin  
(Psalm 51:2, NIV).*

At the Last Supper, Jesus washed his disciples' feet, showing them the full extent of his love.

Even though Jesus knew that his disciples would shamefully abandon him in a few hours' time, he did not give up loving them. Jesus got up from the table, removed his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. He then poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him.

What Jesus did here was an acted-out parable of his ministry. He got up from the festivity of heaven, removed his outer glory, wrapped himself in humanity, and bowed down to wash away the dirt of our daily walk.

To those who refuse to let Christ wash away their sin, he says, "Unless I wash you, you have no part with me" (John 13:8, NIV).

## ▼ DES FORD

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**Eli's Reflection:** *Have you allowed Christ to wash away your sin? Write a list of the things you wish were never part of your character. Pray to God, thank him for his love, and ask him to forgive you for these sins. Then destroy that list and thank God for washing away your sin.*

## JESUS GIVES YOU HIS PERFECT RIGHTEOUSNESS

**We don't have to be good to be saved,  
but we do have to be saved to be good.**

*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, NIV).*

Jesus gives his righteousness to us as a free gift in exchange for our sins (2 Corinthians 5:21). Jesus paid the price for our sins so that we would not have to. He died so that we could live.

To get into heaven, we need to be justified by God. Because we need 100 per cent righteousness to get eternal life, we must accept, by faith, the free gift of God's righteousness from Jesus. Those who put their faith in their own righteousness will miss out, because anything less than 100 per cent righteousness is a fail mark.

It's not a matter of what we have, but whom we have. When Jesus comes into our hearts with his perfect righteousness, he will endeavour to live his life through us, making us more and more righteous every day. This righteousness won't save us, but it shows that we have been saved.

We don't have to be good to be saved, but we do have to be saved to be good.

▼ **DES FORD**

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**Eli's Reflection:** *The most important thing is to accept the free gift of righteousness that Jesus offers us. I encourage you to find a beautiful place in which to pray, and accept the gift, whether you are accepting it for the first time, or you are accepting it anew.*

[illegible]

► *We talk about heaven being so far away. It is within speaking distance to those who belong there. Heaven is a prepared place for a prepared people.* **Dwight L. Moody**

## *Letter from India...*

# **BAPTISED INTO CHRIST AGAINST ALL ODDS**

Every day in villages across India's Andhra Pradesh province, prayers of gratitude rise to God: for Jesus Christ, for salvation that is free to all, and for the generous people like you who made it possible to learn this good news of the Gospel.

These grateful people have discovered the Gospel because of the dedication of GNU donors who keep the GNU TV programme on air in India, and because of the enthusiasm and commitment of Pastor Joseph, who not only preaches on the GNU TV programme, but also travels from village to village holding Gospel Evangelism Meetings.

In spite of opposition—from family and community—many people have accepted Jesus into their lives, and have asked to be baptised. Let's meet a few of them.

**Kanaka** had practised the Hindu rituals of her family for all 52 years of her life, but in spite of this, she didn't know what it was to be happy. Now, she has accepted Jesus and has been baptised. She says: *The moment I accepted Jesus I felt joy, and the grace of God is on me.*

**Prasanthe**, a young woman, told Pastor Joseph: *I was doing idol prayers, and I was not happy.* She attended the Gospel meetings in her village and was fascinated by what she heard. She began viewing the GNU TV programme, and reading the Bible given her by Pastor Joseph. Now she has been baptised and rejoices in the daily presence of Jesus in her life.



▼ **Baptism into Jesus** was so special that each lady wore her best sari.

**Naga Mane** went from wanting to kill herself to seeing her entire family saved in Jesus. It was not an easy road. Her husband and family forbade her to attend the GNU meetings, but she did anyway. Rejoicing in secret about the salvation she had discovered, she prayed for her family. God answered abundantly, and she now praises him openly:

*It is with great happiness that I have been baptised into Christ. And my happiness is full because my whole family have now accepted Jesus. He has given us all new life here on earth.*

**Ramarao's** entire family for as many generations as he could remember was Hindu. It wasn't easy for them to have a Christian in the family, but Ramarao has finally convinced them of the hope and joy that knowing Jesus brings to him. He says: *I am full of gratitude to Jesus, and I am so happy that I have been baptised.*

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▼ **Prayer Point:** *Thank God for the privilege of helping to bring the hope and joy of the Gospel to people who are hungry for it—in India and wherever they are in the world.*

## THE KINGDOM WILL MORE THAN MAKE AMENDS

Although tribulation is the path of God's children,  
they have the comfort of knowing that  
their Master has traversed it before them.

*We must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God (Acts 14:22, KJV).*

God's people have their trials. It was never designed by God, when he chose his people, that they should be an untried people. Freedom from sickness and the pains of mortality was never promised them; but when their Lord drew up the charter of privileges, he included chastisements amongst the things to which they should inevitably be heirs....

Good people must never expect to escape troubles; if they do, they will be disappointed, for none of their predecessors have been without them.... It is ordained of old that the cross of trouble should be engraved on every vessel of mercy, as the royal mark whereby the King's vessels of honour are distinguished.

But although tribulation is thus the path of God's children, they have the comfort of knowing that their Master has traversed it before them; they have his presence and sympathy to cheer them, his grace to support them, and his example to teach them how to endure; and when they reach the kingdom, it will more than make amends for the "much tribulation" through which they passed to enter it.

▼ **CHARLES SPURGEON**

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**Eli's Reflection:** *Is there a favourite Bible text about what God has prepared for you that you find particularly encouraging? Write it down, and add your own response to it. Then mail it to yourself the old-fashioned way. There may come a time when you will need to read what you wrote!*

# CHOOSE JESUS OVER BARABBAS

**Christ went naked to the Cross,  
so that we might be clothed  
in his spotless robe of righteousness.**

*“He himself bore our sins” in his body on the cross, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; “by his wounds you have been healed” (1 Peter 2:24, NIV).*

The crowd shouted that Pilate should release Barabbas and crucify Jesus. This choice was made because people yielded to human pressure rather than to truth and righteousness. The crowd yielded to the chief priests, and Pilate yielded to the crowd. No one yielded to God.

In every decision we make, we too are making this choice. In the things we do, the ambitions we cherish, we choose either Barabbas or Christ. There are no fence sitters, no neutrals. “The one who is not with me,” said Jesus, “is against me.”

Here is the heart of the gospel. You and I are Barabbas—children of our earthly father. We are condemned to die because we have turned our backs on our heavenly Father. But an innocent One has chosen to take our place and die for us. He will suffer, he will agonize, he will endure, that we might be set free. Christ goes naked to the Cross, so that we might be clothed in his spotless robe of righteousness. Christ wears a crown of thorns that we might have a crown of glory. His body was bruised and pierced that ours might be glorified.

▼ **DES FORD**

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**Eli's Reflection:** *Barabbas represents the struggle to set up an earthly kingdom, while Jesus established a Kingdom that is not of this world. Where are you storing your treasures? The answer to that question will show you whether you are a follower of Barabbas or of Christ.*

## JESUS POURED OUT HIS BLOOD FOR YOU

God made a covenant  
that he would save us from our sins  
and that, if we accepted his salvation,  
we would become his people.

*This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins (Matthew 26:28, ESV).*

In the story of Jesus' trial, suffering and death, we read about his seven trials, the seven charges against him, the seven people who testified of his innocence, Pilate's seven questions, and his seven statements that he found no wrong in Jesus. Jesus suffered seven unjust punishments during that long night.

The crucified Jesus had seven wounds, and his crucifixion period lasted seven hours, six hours on the Cross and the seventh being his time of rest when he was taken down. On the Cross, Jesus speaks seven times, and there are seven statements made to Jesus while he hung on the Cross.

These series of sevens are no coincidence. The Hebrew word *sheba* can be translated either 'seven' or 'covenant' (see Genesis 21:27–31). God made a covenant that he would save us from our sins and that, if we accepted his salvation, we would become his people.

On the Cross, Jesus shed his blood for our salvation. He was 'the blood of the covenant', which would be poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever we drink this 'blood', we show that we accept Jesus as our Saviour.

### ▼ DES FORD

**Eli's Reflection:** *A covenant is an agreement. Because of the covenant made through the blood of Jesus, God offers to adopt you into his family and give you eternal life. Have you accepted the covenant of Christ? Have you accepted his blood?*



# YOU ARE SAVED THROUGH THE PRECIOUS BLOOD OF CHRIST

**The only way to God is a blood-marked way:  
the precious blood of Christ.**

*It was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life... but with the precious blood of Christ (1 Peter 1:18–19, NIV).*

All too little is said in these days about the blood of Christ. Some of us seem to avoid the subject as much as possible.... If there is one truth more than another that Satan would oppose, it is the truth of this text... He tells us that we can be saved by reformation, by good deeds. He tells us that we can be saved by doing our best. But all the way through the New Testament we find that the only way to God is a blood-marked way: the precious blood of Christ!

I suggest that you... go through the New Testament, marking with red every passage that has to do with sacrifice, with the death of Christ, every passage that speaks of salvation as the result of the shedding of blood. Well, you will mark a great many passages. You will redden everything that deals with pardon and peace, and forgiveness, and joy, and salvation, and the very music of heaven itself.

Then when you have marked these verses red, take a little pair of scissors and clip out every red verse. Then you will begin to understand how large a place the blood occupies in the salvation of man. The apostle knew this, and because he knew it, he said: The precious blood of Christ!

▼ **J. WILBUR CHAPMAN**

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**Eli's Reflection:** *I am not suggesting that you physically cut up a Bible, but imagine what the New Testament would look like if you actually did what he suggests! Have you decided, as Paul did, to "know nothing... except Jesus Christ and him crucified" (1 Corinthians 2:2)?*

# JESUS IS YOUR KING

**Christ's kingdom is a spiritual kingdom  
in the hearts of people.**

*He is Lord of lords and King of kings, and those who are with Him are the called and chosen and faithful (Revelation 17:14, NASB).*

At one point in Jesus' trial, the leaders of Israel took him to Herod's palace where the Roman Governor, Pilate, was staying. They did not understand that by handing Jesus over to unbelievers, they, as a nation, were rejecting their Messiah and were offering him to the Gentiles.

Pilate came out to meet the Jewish delegation that had brought Jesus and asked, "What charges are you bringing against this man?"

They evaded his question by answering, "If he were not a criminal, we would not have handed him over to you."

Pilate asked his soldiers to bring him the prisoner. When Jesus was standing before him, he asked, "Are you king of the Jews?"

Jesus admitted that he was guilty of the charge, but in such a way that he was innocent. How can that be? It's because his kingdom is not of this world. If it were of this world, his servants would fight.

Christ's kingdom is a spiritual kingdom in the hearts of people, a kingdom that will one day have citizens from every nation on Earth. Yes, Jesus is King of kings and Lord of Lords.

▼ **DES FORD**

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**Eli's Reflection:** *Jesus still is King and kings and Lord of lords. Find a peaceful place in which to walk and accept Jesus again as the Lord of your life. Are there any corners of your life that you must still hand over to his kingdom?*

## PROMISES TO HOLD ON TO

*Take some time to reflect on this group of devotionals.  
What promise would you especially like to hold on to?*

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▀ *There can be no Kingdom of God in the world  
without the Kingdom of God in our hearts.*

**Albert Schweitzer**

*Letter from Kenya...*

## **A HOME IN GOD'S FAMILY**

In Nanyuki, Kenya, a young man's life has been turned around, thanks to the generosity and support of friends like you.

Phineas is 21 years old, but has lived more disappointment and turmoil than many people twice his age. When a bitter feud tore his family apart, he dropped out of school and left home, hoping to find greener pastures.

But his wanderings produced a succession of dashed hopes, and he found himself sharing the city's central park with other homeless people. Such was his hopelessness that he began to feel that death would be a better alternative than continuing to struggle through such misery.

But then God intervened. One day the Grace Revolution Crusade (a partnership between GNU and the African Inland Church), was set up in the park. Since he was right there, Phineas began to listen.

Before long, he was hooked. He heard stories of people who were just as desperate as he felt, but who were healed and saved by Jesus.

On the final day of the crusade, GNU's preacher told the story of the prodigal son, describing the misery of that boy in the far country. *"That's me!"* said Phineas to himself. *"I'm a prodigal son, and now there's a way to go home to a God who loves me!"*

When the alter call came, Phineas was among the people who walked to the front of the gathering to give their



▼ **Phineas:** *My home in God's kingdom is assured, thanks to the Gospel of Jesus Christ..*

lives to Jesus. He had come to a home he had not known existed, home to God, his Heavenly Father.

Phineas now lives in a church compound, eating with other sons and daughters of God, courtesy of the Good Samaritans in the local church community. As if that wasn't enough, the church is sponsoring the remainder of his high school education. He is overflowing with gratitude.

He says, *"I thank God for the Grace Revolution Crusade run by GNU and the church. It saved my entire life."*

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▼ **Prayer Point:** *Thank Jesus for the home we have in his love and grace. Pray for Phineas as he travels the Christian path; and ask God that many other homeless people will also find their security and comfort in Christ..*

## WE HAVE SORROW ONLY FOR A LITTLE WHILE

The day will come when our weeping and lamenting will be turned to joy, and no one will be able to take that joy away from us.

*In a little while you will see me no more, and then after a little while you will see me (John 16:16, NIV).*

With hindsight we know what Jesus was telling his disciples in this passage. Jesus speaks of “a little while” (*micron*, from which we get our word “micro”). He was telling his disciples that they wouldn’t see him for the “little while” that he would be in the grave, but after this “little while” they would see him again. This “little while”, for them, would be a time of weeping and lamenting while the world rejoiced, but after that “little while” their grief would be turned to joy, and no one would ever take that joy away from them.

We, too, have our “little whiles” in which we weep and lament, but they won’t last long either, because Jesus has conquered mankind’s greatest enemy—death. The day will come when our weeping and lamenting will also be turned to joy, and no one will be able to take that joy away from us, for death will have been abolished forever.

In the meantime we are both “in the world” and “in Jesus”. In Jesus we have peace (that’s a promise), but in this world we will have trouble (a promise). But if we identify with Jesus, the world will never overcome us (another promise: 1 John 4:4) because Jesus has overcome the world (John 16:33).

### ▼ RITCHIE WAY

**Eli’s Reflection:** *The verse reassures us that our “little whiles” will only last a “little while,” and then there will be joy. Are you going through one of those “little whiles” right now? If you are, find a strong and loving Christian to talk to about it. If you aren’t, ask God to guide you to someone who is struggling, and encourage them in Christ.*

# JESUS' KINGDOM IS ONE OF FORGIVENESS

**We do not begin to live  
until we shut the door on the past  
through forgiveness.**

*Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing (Luke 23:34, NIV).*

"Father, forgive them." We do not begin to live until we shut the door on the past through forgiveness. And no one lives properly until they have experienced forgiveness themselves.

Fortunately, it's not hard to know when we have received forgiveness ourselves. Just as you can't give money to someone else until you have received it yourself, so you cannot give forgiveness to anyone else until you have received it yourself.

If you are unable to forgive someone who has sinned against you, it is because you haven't received forgiveness yourself. And if you aren't forgiven, then you aren't saved (Matthew 6:14–15). Forgiveness is a bridge that we must all pass over to enter the kingdom of God.

Every relationship in life calls for forgiveness. There are no perfect wives, perfect husbands, or perfect children. There are no perfect employers or perfect employees. And there are no perfect friends or neighbours. For this reason, forgiveness must be the very essence of our relationships with others. It must be as natural as breathing.

▼ **DES FORD**

**Eli's Reflection:** *Think of someone whom you need to forgive, whether or not they have asked for forgiveness or want to be forgiven. Ask God to give you his forgiveness so you can forgive that person. And then, as God puts it into your heart and shows you how to do it, tell that person in an appropriate way that you love them, and have forgiven them.*

## JESUS TEACHES US TO TRUST IN GOD

**There is nothing to fear in either life or death  
when you trust in the God of love.**

*Do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed,  
for I am your God (Isaiah 41:10, NIV).*

Christ's last word on the Cross is to his Father: "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit" (Luke 23:46, NIV). These were the trusting words of a Hebrew child's goodnight prayer.

Like Job who refused to let go of his faith in God despite his perplexing sufferings, Jesus committed himself to his Father even though there appeared to be no escape from destruction for him.

Every Christian can have the same confidence about dying that Jesus did. There is nothing to fear in either life or death when you trust in the God of love.

God never says goodbye to anyone who rests in him, and we can rest in him because Christ has defeated all our enemies. The Bible says: "If God is on our side, who can really be our enemy?" (from Romans 8:31).

As our Lord uttered his last words, their sound was mingled with the cries of thousands of Passover lambs in the outer court of the temple on the opposite hill. But our faith is not in the blood of lambs, but in the blood of "Christ our Passover lamb" (1 Corinthians 5:7) who was sacrificed for us.

▼ **DES FORD**

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**Eli's Reflection:** *Our society, and the lives of many, is dominated at its core by a fear of death. We should not seek death, but ask yourself the question, "Am I afraid to die?" How much do you trust God and the sacrifice of Jesus Christ for you?*



# JESUS SAVES YOU EVEN WHEN YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND

Have faith in God,  
especially when travelling  
through the valley of the shadow of death..

*Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother, his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene (John 19:25, NIV).*

Jesus' followers stood bewildered near the cross. They did not understand why Jesus was allowing these terrible things to happen to him. He had overcome every other challenge in his life. Why didn't he reveal his power and come down from the cross?

Many times in life we ask the same question: why doesn't God do something? Why is he allowing this great evil? There is a reason. We just have to trust that God will act in his own time. So have faith in God, especially when travelling through the valley of the shadow of death.

The Roman centurion who supervised the crucifixion of Jesus had ample time to observe everything that happened. He noticed the kind of person that Jesus was and heard every word he spoke. "The centurion seeing what had happened praised God and said, 'Surely this was a righteous man'" (Luke 23:47, NIV).

This man who was responsible for the execution of Jesus confessed his faith in the Saviour. What a wonderful gospel: it can change even the hearts of those who crucify the Lord; it can transform enemies into friends.

▼ **DES FORD**

**Eli's Reflection:** *Have you ever asked God, "Why?" If you are asking God that question now, find a peaceful place, maybe overlooking the ocean, or on a hill, and pray that God will give you faith to follow Jesus even when you cannot understand the big picture.*

# JESUS HAS FINISHED WHAT YOU COULD NEVER DO

**Jesus was excluded from God's presence  
so we could enter in.**

*We have been forgiven and made clean by Christ's dying for us once and for all (Hebrews 10:10, TLB).*

Towards the end of the sixth hour on the Cross, Jesus shouted victoriously, "It is finished" (John 19:30). In the original language, it is just one word. But what a library there is in that one word! That same word for a debtor meant that his debt was paid in full. That same word for a prisoner meant that his sentence was completed.

And so it is with us: our debt to God is paid in full and our sentence of death has been commuted. "Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus" (Romans 8:1, NIV).

This was the word that God and all creation were waiting to hear. Jesus was triumphant and his great work of redemption was done. His sufferings were almost over, and he would soon close his eyes in death.

At the same moment that Jesus uttered these words, "the curtain of the temple was torn in two from the top to the bottom", showing that Jesus, by his death, had removed the barrier that kept man from God, so that we could now boldly enter the presence of the Lord (Matthew 27:51; Hebrews 10:19–22).

He was excluded from God's presence so that we could enter in.

▼ **DES FORD**

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**Eli's Reflection:** *Find a quiet place and meditate for a time on the question, "What do the words, 'It is finished!' mean to me?" Pray that you will continue to grow in understanding and appreciation of that meaning.*

## PROMISES TO HOLD ON TO

*Take some time to reflect on this group of devotionals.  
What promise would you especially like to hold on to?*

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▼ *To be a Christian means to forgive the inexcusable  
because God has forgiven the inexcusable in you.*  
**C.S. Lewis**

*Letter from India...*

## **THE LOVE OF GOD TOUCHES THE UNTOUCHABLES**

Thanks to you, God's love has touched the untouchables of India. In the village of Ventrapagada, there is an 'untouchable' community that lives excluded from the rest of society.

The people here are so poor that they live in a cluster of huts that have never seen running water or electricity. They have no beds or basic furniture, and they live without most of the seemingly simple things that other people in their village take for granted. Their daily meal, if they are fortunate enough to get one that day, consists of a rat or a snake caught in the fields.

Their children have no access to proper schooling. Life is very difficult in this abandoned strata of Indian society where government and community good intentions seldom reach.

But God's love can reach everywhere, as it did recently when Pastor Joseph discovered the community. Following Jesus' example of reaching out to those rejected by society, he stopped and took the time to hear about their lives. He shared practical help, and with it, the hope of the Gospel and the love of Jesus.

Now the community receives a weekly visit from Pastor Joseph. And as he brings them food, shares the Gospel stories, and prays over the children and their parents, the light of God's love becomes stronger for these people.



▼ *Pastor Joseph brings physical as well as spiritual food for the 'untouchable' children of Ventrapagada*

Fathana, one of the women in this 'untouchable' community, told Pastor Joseph:

*All our ancestors died without knowing about Jesus. And children were born and lived all their lives without any understanding of Jesus and the Gospel. But through you, we have come to know about him. We are saved in Christ Jesus. Thanks to Jesus.*

Gagadhar, one of the men in the community says:

*All we have are these tiny huts and we had no way of hearing about Jesus until God sent you to us. Now I've accepted Jesus into my life, and I have hope and happiness. Now I want the same for our children. Please pray for them that they too will accept Jesus.*

▼ **Prayer Point:** *Thank God that he has appointed us as his instruments to help share Good News to those in desperate need. Ask that through his power, the Word will spread fast so more people may know the joy of the Gospel.*

# YOU HAVE TO LET GO TO ENTER THE KINGDOM

It's not by what we offer  
that we enter the Kingdom of Heaven,  
but by what we accept.

*I assure you that when the world is made new ... everyone who has given up houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or property, for my sake, will receive a hundred times as much in return and will inherit eternal life (Matthew 19:28–29, NLT).*

I was sailing on a catamaran when a gust of wind tipped us into the water, and the mast, which hadn't been properly secured, came off! I desperately tried to hold on to it, but every time a wave came, my head went under. Eventually I saw sense: I had to let go of the mast so I wouldn't drown.

So I let go. I lost the expensive mast and saved my life.

None of us will enter the Kingdom of God with anything in our hands. When the Bible shows us a picture of the people who have been saved in heaven, they're not holding anything except what Jesus has given them as a free gift.

That's the shocking scandal of grace. Too many of us spend our lives trying to hold on to the things that bring us death.

It's not by what we offer that we enter the Kingdom of Heaven, but by what we accept. We must let go in order to receive. The greatest struggle we will have in our Christian lives will be to recognise that if we have accepted Jesus, then the work for our salvation is finished. Our peace and joy depend on this.

▼ **ELIEZER GONZALEZ**

**Eli's Reflection:** *What is standing between you and a closer walk with Jesus? If you let go of it, how would your life be different? Pray over it, write it down and ask God to help you let go. Then screw up the paper and throw it away.*

# THE CROSS OF JESUS IS GOD'S GREATEST REVELATION

**The Cross of Calvary is God's  
greatest revelation of truth.**

*I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified (1 Corinthians 2:2, NIV).*

The Cross of Calvary is God's greatest revelation of truth. It reveals to us the true nature of the God we worship—a God who is not only righteous and holy, but who is also prepared to sacrifice himself fully for us. No other god ever sacrificed himself for his people. Instead, other gods demanded sacrifices from their people.

Our God gave himself as a sacrifice for us so that we could be totally free of condemnation.

The Cross was the true altar on which the Lamb of God was slain for the sins of the world. Jesus' blood was shed there for your sins so that you would be set free from the law's condemnation (John 3:18, Romans 8:1).

The very shape of the Cross suggests the length, the breadth, the depth and the height of God's love. It points to heaven where our Lord came from, but is rooted in the earth that he came to redeem. The outstretched arms are an invitation to all men, even his crucifiers, to come to him.

Men may reject an angry god, but how can they reject the suffering One who was prepared to die for them?

▼ **DES FORD**

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**Eli's Reflection:** *Find a book or website that describes what crucifixion was really like. Read it carefully and imagine what it must have been like. And then go and surrender your life to Jesus all over again.*

## THERE'S NO NEED TO WAIT

You are forgiven. You are accepted. You are His.

There's no longer any need to wait.

*What are you waiting for? ...Have your sins washed away by calling on the name of the Lord (Acts 22:16, NLT).*

It was a long wait when that woman who was a foreigner followed Jesus along the road, crying out, "Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David!" (Matthew 15:22, NLT). For a time, he answered her not a word.

It was a long wait when the crowd cried for the blood of the immoral woman thrown at Jesus' feet. And he remained silent while he wrote on the ground (John 8:6–7). And all the while, the woman wondered.

It was a long wait after they had brutally nailed Jesus to the timbers, and had raised him up high. What would he say? "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34, ESV).

You will go through your own times of apparent silence. But it is not God who is silent; it's just our hearts that need tuning to his frequency of love. Listen to it now.

The longest silence was on that Friday afternoon when they placed Jesus in a tomb behind a rock. They thought he would never again be heard. But on the Sunday, the whole world heard his voice.

You are forgiven. You are accepted. You are His. There's no longer any need to wait.

▼ **ELIEZER GONZALEZ**

**Eli's Reflection:** *In our daily lives, we seem always to be waiting for something. As Christians, perhaps we are waiting to become a better person, to feel forgiven, or even for Jesus to come again! What would your life be like if you accepted that with Jesus you don't have to wait for salvation? What's stopping you from living like that?*



# WHEN YOU LIFT THE CROSS, IT LIFTS YOU

**Where there is no going down into the valley of grief,  
there can be no rising up to the mountain of glory.**

*Take up your cross, and follow me (Matthew 16:24, NLT).*

Our Lord's life was a life of suffering in order that suffering might be sanctified. He was a refugee in Egypt during his childhood, that refugees might draw comfort from his plight. In youth, he lived in a home of poverty, that the poor might know that his sympathies are always with them.

He knows what it is to be despised and rejected of men, in order that you and I might feel that he is always sufficient.

And on the Cross he thought of every person who would ever suffer. In those six hours he sanctified every agony through which every son and daughter of God could ever pass.

But our Lord turned Black Friday into a Good Friday, because where there is no Black Friday, there can be no resurrection Sunday. Where there is no going down into the valley of grief, there can be no rising up to the mountain of glory. Where there is no tom flesh, there can be no glorified body.

There is no such thing as the Christian life without bearing the cross. If we will accept the cross, it will become like wings to a bird; it will become like sails to a ship. In lifting the Cross, we shall find that it lifts us.

▼ **DES FORD**

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**Eli's Reflection:** *Think of one thing that causes you suffering today. Could this be part of the cross Christ calls you to carry? The Apostle Paul tells us to give thanks always to God the Father for everything (Ephesians 5:20). Can you thank God for the cross he asks you to carry? If not, ask God to give you grace.*

# JESUS HAS CONQUERED DEATH FOR YOU

**It is the death and resurrection of Jesus  
that gives us an eternal home with God.**

*Where, O death, is your victory?*

*Where, O death, is your sting?*

*(1 Corinthians 15:55, NIV).*

Jesus said: "I am...the Living One; I was dead, and behold, now I am alive forever and ever! And I hold the keys of Death and Hades" (Revelation 1:17, BSB).

Jesus, by his death and resurrection, opened the way back to God and life for us. His resurrection gives meaning to life and death. It teaches us the truth about death: it is not the end, and eternal life is waiting for everyone who accepts the true Gospel.

That is why, after he rose from the dead, those who were raised to life by his death went into the holy city (Matthew 27:53). It is the death and resurrection of Jesus that gives us an eternal home with God.

There have been many great religious leaders in the world, but all of them have surrendered to death. Only one has risen from the dead, and that is Jesus Christ. When our Lord rose from the dead, he turned the tables on sin and death. The song of the redeemed is, "O death, where now is your sting? O grave, where now is your victory?"

Death has been conquered! And Jesus says to all who follow him, "Because I live, you also will live" (John 14:19, NIV)."

▼ **DES FORD**

**Eli's Reflection:** *What does it mean to live because of Jesus? Do you live like that? Think about one thing that you can change in your life to bring honour to Jesus Christ, and then pray that God will give you the way and the will to do it.*

## PROMISES TO HOLD ON TO

*Take some time to reflect on this group of devotionals.*

*What promise would you especially like to hold on to?*

[illegible]

Remember, as a believer, you are already in God's kingdom, even if you are still standing on this earth. **Van Harden**

*Letter from Ukraine...*

## FROM DRUG ADDICTION TO FREEDOM IN JESUS!

After decades of drug addiction, Alexander credits his freedom from drugs and suffering to the God who understands what it is to suffer.

*"Finally I understand what it is to be happy, and to have peace and comfort in my heart," he told GNU. "I have found Jesus and he has given me the power to quit my drug habit."*

Thanks to your faithful support, Alexander has a new life of hope, replacing the cycle of despair and addiction in which he lived. Drugs had dominated his life, wrecked his marriage, and caused major health problems. He had tried desperately to quit, even going to a series of rehab clinics. But nothing worked.

Then one day he met a pastor who invited him to some spiritual meetings supported by GNU. There he learned that the God who had suffered would be by his side in the struggle to give up drugs; that he could accept Jesus' offer of salvation, and that Jesus would then help him to change from the inside. The journey with God began.

The health problems caused by decades of drug taking remained, even though *"Jesus was close to me, giving me the strength to endure the pain..."* But the time had come to ask God for special healing, and Alexander was anointed by the pastor who had led him to the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

That very night he began to heal, and he is now fully healthy, rejoicing that he can help to lead other drug addicts to healing in Jesus. He is thankful for the difficult path he has travelled, *"because I have experienced God's liberation, and I am thankful that now he has chosen me to help others."*

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▼ **Prayer Point:** *Pray for the many people caught in cycles of addiction and despair. Ask God lead us to help his struggling children find peace and joy in the Gospel.*

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### **Biblical Quotations**

The following translations of the Bible have been used:

NIV	New International Version
KJV	King James Version
AKJV	American King James Version
NET	NET Bible
ESV	English Standard Version
ISV	International Standard Version
NLT	New Living Translation
RV	Revised Version
NASB	New American Standard Bible
TLB	The Living Bible
BSB	Berean Study Bible

Where no Bible reference appears, the authors have paraphrased the original text.

# GET TO KNOW THE AUTHORS

## DR DESMOND FORD



Dr Desmond Ford has a vibrant enthusiasm for spreading the gospel of Jesus Christ. Affectionately known as “Des”, he’s worked as a pastor, and been a Bible teacher, minister and theologian for more than sixty years. He’s earned several degrees including two PhDs in theology, and has written twenty books.

Des Ford’s preaching emphasises justification by faith – the Good News that Christ, by his life and death, redeemed the world so that now “whosoever will, may come” to God. He affirms that the gospel is for everyone, following the instruction that Christ’s name should “be declared throughout all the earth”.

## DR ELIEZER GONZALEZ



Eliezer Gonzalez is passionate about the gospel. With a previous background in teaching and management, he was called by the Lord into the gospel ministry. He’s earned Master’s degrees in Theology and Early Christian History, and a PhD in Early Christian History.

Most importantly, Eliezer communicates the gospel of Jesus Christ in a simple yet powerful way, and has presented this life-changing message in many countries and in many different forums. He’s praying for “millions upon millions of people to be in the Kingdom of God” as Good News Unlimited partners with you to spread the Word fast about Jesus.

**God's Unlimited Promises  
to Hold On To**

# UNLIMITED KINGDOM

*Unlimited Kingdom* is the second in GNU's ongoing series of nine-week devotional booklets. Written by Eliezer Gonzalez and Des Ford, these encouraging devotionals are interspersed with wisdom and insights from great Christian thinkers. Inside, you'll find personal reflections and testimonies from GNU's global ministry to help you live daily for Christ, and to inspire you with the proven power of God's love in action.

It's our prayer that *Unlimited Kingdom* will take you deeper into God's promise of unlimited love for you.

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