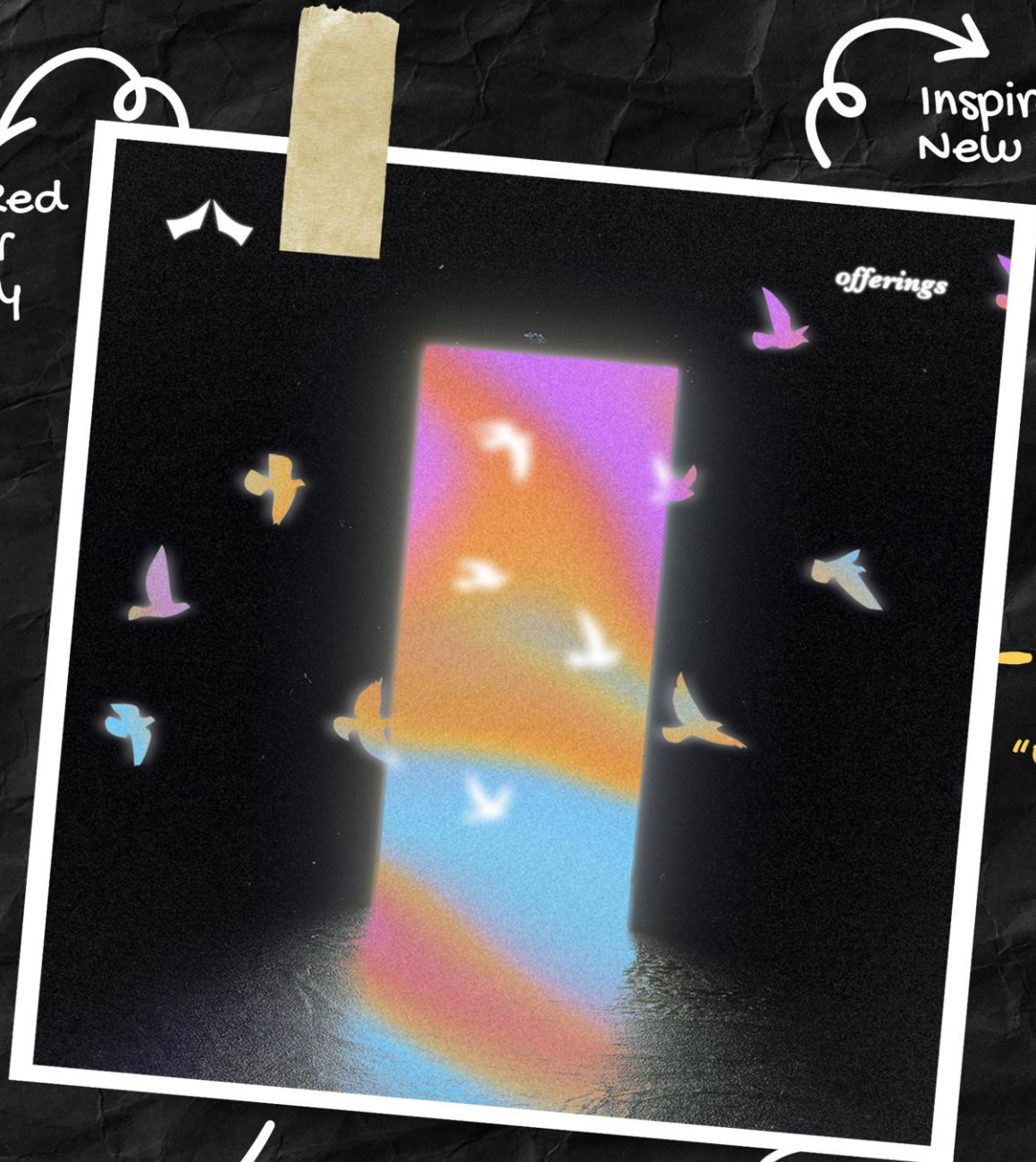


By the Red Letter Society Team

Inspired By New Songs



*offerings*

Daily "offerings"

Rooted In Scripture

Deep Theology and Simple Application

# Daily Offerings: An 8-Week Devotional

## Table of Contents

<b>Week 1—Heaven</b> .....	<b>4</b>
Day 1: Promise of Heaven.....	4
Day 2: Worship in Heaven.....	5
Day 3: Eternity With God.....	6
Day 4: Renewed in His Presence .....	7
<b>Week 2—This Life</b> .....	<b>8</b>
Day 5: This Abundant Life .....	8
Day 6: Joy in Christ Through Suffering.....	9
Day 7: Hope in Christ Through Suffering.....	10
Day 8: Suffering With Christ.....	11
<b>Week 3—Foundation</b> .....	<b>12</b>
Day 9: Built in Christ.....	12
Day 10: A Sure Foundation.....	13
Day 11: The Precious Cornerstone .....	14
Day 12: A People for His Own Possession .....	15
<b>Week 4—Peace</b> .....	<b>16</b>
Day 13: I Shall Not Want .....	16
Day 14: Here With the Shepherd King .....	17
Day 15: Grieving With Our Future Hope.....	18
Day 16: Embrace Heavenly Hospitality .....	19
<b>Week 5—Valley</b> .....	<b>20</b>
Day 17: Christ’s Victory Over Death.....	20
Day 18: Made Alive in Christ.....	21
Day 19: Healing From Brokenness.....	22
Day 20: Living in His Triumph .....	23
<b>Week 6— I Claim the Cross</b> .....	<b>24</b>
Day 21: The Death of Self.....	24
Day 22: The Painful, Effective Cross .....	25

Day 23: Pressing Toward Resurrection Life .....	26
Day 24: The Hope of Transformation.....	27
<b>Week 7—<i>Friend of Sinners</i>.....</b>	<b>28</b>
Day 25: Jesus, the Friend of Sinners .....	28
Day 26: Baptism—Immersed in the Name .....	29
Day 27: The Lord’s Supper—A Table of Grace .....	30
Day 28: Jesus Washes the Feet of His Disciples .....	31
<b>Week 8—<i>Adonai</i>.....</b>	<b>32</b>
Day 29: Living Sacrificially .....	32
Day 30: A Broken and Contrite Heart .....	33
Day 31: Transformation in Christ.....	34
Day 32: Our Lives as Offerings .....	35

# Week 1—Heaven

## Day 1: Promise of Heaven

**Key Passage:** Revelation 21–22

**Devotional:**

“There’s no place like home. There’s no place like home.” This iconic phrase from Dorothy in the movie rendition of *The Wizard of Oz* represents her longing to return to Kansas—the place she dearly loves, with the family she dearly loves, living in the comfort of what is deeply known. Trapped in a foreign land, she desires the rest she knows can only be found in her true home. Much like this aspect of Dorothy’s journey, believers in Christ live in the current broken world, longing to return to their true home. However, this home is not simply a place but a person.

Throughout the Old Testament, the Israelites traveled with a portable place of worship—the tabernacle. In the tabernacle, they had the opportunity (through the mediation of a high priest) to meet with the presence of God. It was there that they were able to experience the glory of His goodness and offer acceptable worship. The tabernacle was set in the midst of their camp to dwell among them as a reminder of the God they loved. But the curtains and the thick veil kept them separated from enjoying His presence.

With the dawn of the new covenant, we see Jesus sent to earth in the form of a human to dwell among men (See John 1:14.). The Greek word *skēnoō*, used in this passage, means “to tabernacle.” Jesus took up His residence amid humanity— “our camp” —so that we might have the opportunity to fully commune with God. He donned flesh and conquered death to win our redemption. It was upon His finished work on the cross that the veil in the temple (the permanent tabernacle) was torn. Access to God was unfettered, no longer mediated by a high priest, and people could freely come to meet the God they loved. But Jesus spoke still of a day when believers would be united in perfect fellowship with God forever.

Revelation 21:3 gives us a glimpse of that coming day. Speaking of the New Jerusalem, it says, “The dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be His people.” The word used in this passage is, again, “tabernacle”! The focus is not on the location but the relationship. In this glimpse of Heaven, we see how God dwells in perfect communion with His people. The whole story of Scripture points to the reunification of humanity with God, and it is in Heaven that God dwells in the midst of His people in unbroken fellowship. It is there that believers will find the home we were created for and so desperately long for. It is there—with the presence of God dwelling in our midst—that we will fully know and understand Him, be restored in perfect relationship, be rid of the brokenness from sin, and be filled with the rest that comes with being home.

**Song Reflection:** “Singing in Heaven the songs of your praise/And laughing for joy cause you’re our everything/We praise you, we praise you”

**Application Question:** What do you imagine Heaven to be like? Using Revelation 21-22, make a list of characteristics used to describe life in Heaven.

**Further Reading:** John 14:1-7; 1 Corinthians 13:12; Revelation 4:1-11

Written by Alexandra Gibson

## Day 2: Worship in Heaven

**Key Passage:** Revelation 4:8–5:14

**Devotional:**

Every home has a culture. Growing up, I thought I was a quiet person. It wasn't until I attended college that I realized I actually was not quiet at all. It was only in the context of my home culture—a large, rambunctious, slightly chaotic, and VERY LOUD family—that I seemed quiet. When my friend, an only child from a very well-ordered home, came to visit, she felt so uncomfortable that she stated she would never willfully visit again. She didn't understand my home culture.

Revelation 4-5 gives a picture of the throne room of Heaven, where there is loud, incessant praise from a multitude of humans and heavenly creatures. Here, we begin to catch a glimpse of the worship culture of our heavenly home.

The author, John the Beloved (Jesus's disciple and close friend), opens with a beautifully detailed description of God the Father seated on His throne and Jesus portrayed as the Lamb who takes away the sins of the world. The worshippers, comprised of majestic and somewhat terrifying (Full of eyes!) heavenly beings—elders, myriads and myriads of angels, and all the creatures of the world—continually proclaim His worthiness, holiness, and glory. This peek into heaven gives us an understanding of the contents of our praise. There, we see the worshippers bowed low, falling down in worship before the Almighty God, overwhelmed in humility upon encountering His holiness. With their posture, they acknowledge that He alone is worthy of all praise.

In Revelation 5:9-10, the elders praise Jesus for His finished work on the cross. The content of their praise forever rehearses the work of the Gospel. In Revelation 4:11, God the Father is praised for His work in creation. In John 4:4, Jesus, speaking to the woman at the well, says, "The hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him."

The worship culture of our heavenly home is full of loud singing, proclaiming the truth of God—His holy character, His unending goodness, His marvelous and eternal glory, the account of the Gospel, and the humble response in spirit. When we encounter the truth of God, it ought to lead to our own humility and His exaltation. This passage points to the unending repetition of this doxological cycle (truth, humility, praise, repeat) as the overwhelming culture of our heavenly home.

**Song Reflection:** "The joy in your presence it won't fade away/My voice won't grow tired of all of this praise/We'll never stop singing for infinite days"

**Application Question:** Meditate on the truth of God's character. Write down whatever comes to mind. How will you respond in humility and praise to the truth of God today?

**Further Reading:** Isaiah 6

Written by Alexandra Gibson

## Day 3: Eternity With God

**Key Passage:** 2 Corinthians 4:1-5:7

**Devotional:**

I'm not sure who first said it, but many have throughout the years—"A thorough reading of Scripture reveals that only two things last forever: the Word of God (see Isaiah 40:8) and the souls of men."

This week, we've been focusing our attention on our heavenly home. We look forward to an eternity of dwelling with God and forever praising Him for His character and acts. However, for now, we still live in the reality of a sin-broken world, navigating the difficulties of marred relationships, disappointing experiences, and the ache of longing for the perfection that is yet to come. We find ourselves caught in the tension of the "already, but not yet."

So how does our longing for eternity impact the present? In 2 Corinthians 4-5, Paul addresses this question with a twofold answer: By (1) passionately sharing the gospel and (2) patiently enduring suffering.

During our time on earth, believers are called to set our eyes on what will last forever. We are commissioned to share the Gospel and, as Paul writes in 2 Corinthians 4, to commit ourselves wholeheartedly to the advancement of God's kingdom. We are also called to endure hardship, keeping our focus on Jesus (See Hebrews 12:1-2.) and the eternal home we have been promised (See 2 Corinthians 4:17-18.) as our motivation to persevere through difficulties.

I'm always astounded by Paul's perspective in these verses. Throughout his missionary journeys, he faced countless persecutions, shipwrecks, false accusations, and temptations—yet he maintained the view that "this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison." His eternal perspective fueled his urgency to share the good news of redemption with all who would hear. It also enabled him to face opposition with peace, knowing that the coming glory of Heaven far outweighed any hardship he might endure on earth.

A few years ago, my family faced the unexpected death of my father-in-law. While that season was incredibly difficult, I am grateful for the hope that we will see him again in Heaven one day. Until then, the Lord has used that season to remind me of life's brevity and to fix my affections on Heaven. Too often, we pour our time, resources, and efforts into accumulating things that will fade away—sometimes before we are even gone. When we ponder eternity, it helps us gain the right perspective on our current circumstances. They will not last forever, but the souls of people will.

**Application Question:** Consider the coming glory of Heaven. Does pondering the eternity to come give you a deeper fervency to share the Gospel with someone? If so, who? Is there a trial or temptation that begins to pale in light of the eternity that you will spend in your heavenly home?

**Further Reading:** 2 Corinthians 5:8-21

Written by Alexandra Gibson

## Day 4: Renewed in His Presence

**Key Passage:** Romans 8:18-39

**Devotional:**

“The whole of creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. And not only the creation, but we ourselves...” (Romans 8:22). We live in a unique moment in history—the Church Age. We have been given the completed canon of Scripture, the full revelation of the Gospel, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, and the knowledge that the kingdom of God is here. Yet, we still live in a world broken by sin, not yet “home.” As Paul writes, we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies” (Romans 8:23).

Earlier this week, we considered our promised home in Heaven—more than just a place—it is the restoration of perfect fellowship with God. It is an unbroken relationship. It is dwelling with Him! On that day, all wrongs will be made right, and every broken thing will be restored. But that day has not yet come. Until then, we wait.

Romans 8 describes the posture of our hearts as we wait, in hope, for the redemption of a world that has been “subjected to futility” (See Romans 8:20.). How we worship as we wait prepares us for the life to come. Even now, we have the opportunity to align our hearts with the “culture” of Heaven so that we are ready when we arrive. Paul lays out the journey of sanctification in Romans 8—the lifelong process of becoming more like Christ—leading to our eventual glorification, when sin is completely removed, and we are made perfect in eternity. In this passage, Paul also identifies two essential gifts that sustain us as we wait: the Holy Spirit and the inseparable love of God. By the Spirit of God, we continue to grow in Christlike character—love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, and self-control (See Galatians 5:22.). By the love of God, we are reminded of our worth and are compelled to share the gospel with others (See 2 Corinthians 5:14-15.). It is through these gifts that we endure, waiting with patient hope for the day when all things will be made new.

So, what does it mean to wait in hope? How can we worship as we wait for eternity? Kevin DeYoung challenges us with this thought: “If you don’t like the things of God now, why do you think you will like them in Heaven?” By loving what God loves, we demonstrate our love for Him and prepare our hearts for eternity with Him. As we anticipate our heavenly home, here are ways we can grow in love for the things of God while we wait:

- **Praise God** for His character and mighty works.
- **Commit yourself** to the Word of God.
- **Fervently share the gospel**—Jesus will be forever glorified through it!
- **Grow in holiness** by the power of the Holy Spirit.
- **Love God** as He has loved you.

May we worship as we wait, living in joyful anticipation of the day when our faith will become sight.

**Application Question:** How are you loving the things of God? Does anything above stick out to you where you can grow? What’s one way that you can demonstrate love for the things of God?

**Song Reflection:** “Dancing in heaven with unending praise/Renewed in your presence/These bones aren’t the same/We love you, we love you”

**Further Reading:** Revelation 21-22

Written by Alexandra Gibson

# Week 2—This Life

## Day 5: This Abundant Life

**Key Passage:** John 10

**Devotional:**

The thief is cunning. He does not burst into your life with obvious destruction. He comes subtly, weaving lies that sound true, convincing you that abundant life is found in wealth, comfort, success, and self-sufficiency. He steals joy by shifting your focus from the Shepherd to your circumstances. He kills hope by telling you that suffering is proof that God is not good. He destroys peace by making you chase after what cannot satisfy.

But Jesus, the Good Shepherd, offers something far greater. He doesn't promise an easy life but an abundant one—one that cannot be changed by the rise and fall of earthly comforts. In John 10, Jesus contrasts Himself with the thief, pointing to the religious leaders of His day who sought control and power rather than the true care of God's people. Yet beyond them, the thief represents the enemy of our souls—Satan himself—who has been deceiving and destroying since the beginning. His goal is clear—to pull you away from the only One who can truly give life.

Psalm 23 paints a picture of what this abundant life looks like: "The LORD is my Shepherd; I shall not want." Abundance is not about excess but about sufficiency. Jesus, our Shepherd, leads us to green pastures and still waters—not in the form of material prosperity—but in the deep rest and peace found in Him. Even in the midst of suffering, He restores our souls. The abundant life is not the absence of hardship but the presence of the Shepherd in every trial.

David, who wrote Psalm 23, knew suffering well. He was hunted, betrayed, and faced deep personal failures. Yet he declared, "Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me." This is the abundance Jesus offers—not the elimination of valleys, but His presence in them. He prepares a table for us in the presence of our enemies, an image of His divine hand in the face of the thief.

Many believe that if life is hard, they must be doing something wrong or that God is withholding His best from them. But abundant life is not about circumstances; it is about Christ Himself. His peace is not dependent on a life free of suffering but instead, His presence amid it. His rest is not something we earn but something He provides. His goodness and mercy do not follow us only in good times but all the days of our lives.

The thief steals, kills, and destroys. Jesus gives life—full, abundant, eternal.

**Application Question:** Where have you been tempted to define abundance by earthly measures rather than by the presence of Christ?

**Further Reading:** Psalm 23

Written by Jaclyn Mains



## Day 6: Joy in Christ Through Suffering

**Key Passage:** James 1:2-3

**Devotional:**

Suffering is inevitable in this broken world. But as believers, we do not suffer alone. We serve a Savior who is well acquainted with grief (see Isaiah 53:3), a God who does not remain distant from our pain but entered into it. Jesus, the spotless Lamb, walked this earth, endured every temptation, felt the weight of sorrow, and bore the full measure of sin—yet remained without a single stain of sin (see Hebrews 4:15). He who knew no sin became sin for us so that we might stand before God in righteousness (see 2 Corinthians 5:21).

This is why we can have joy even in suffering. Joy is not found in the absence of hardship but in the presence of Christ. As we have already learned, the abundant life Jesus offers is not a fleeting happiness tied to circumstances, but a deep, unshakable joy that remains even when life falls apart. This joy is not something we muster up on our own—it is given to us by the Holy Spirit, who dwells in us and walks alongside us. Romans 8:26 tells us that the Spirit groans with us in our weakness, interceding on our behalf. In our grief, in our struggles, when we feel overwhelmed and abandoned, the Holy Spirit reminds us that we are never alone.

This is the joy that sustained Paul as he suffered imprisonment, beatings, and rejection for the gospel. This is the joy that carried Christ to the cross, as He endured it “for the joy set before Him” (see Hebrews 12:2). And this is the joy that can sustain us today. It is not rooted in our circumstances but in the unshakable truth that Christ has already gone before us, that He has conquered sin and death, and that He will never leave or forsake us.

No matter what trials we face, we can take heart. We may grieve, but not without hope. We may suffer, but not without purpose. And we may struggle, but never without the presence of God. The abundant life is not about avoiding hardship but about knowing that in every trial, Christ is our joy.

**Application Question:** How does knowing that the Holy Spirit walks with you in suffering change the way you respond to trials?

**Further Reading:** Romans 8:18-26; Hebrews 4:15-16

Written by Jaclyn Mains

## Day 7: Hope in Christ Through Suffering

**Key passage:** 2 Corinthians 4:17-18

**Devotional:**

Suffering often leaves us with more questions than answers. Why does God heal some but not others? Why does He allow certain trials to linger while delivering others in an instant? We wrestle with these questions, searching for clarity, but Scripture never promises that we will understand all of God's ways. Instead, it points us to something greater—His glory.

When Jesus healed the blind man in John 9, His disciples assumed the man's suffering was a result of sin. But Jesus answered, "Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but this happened so that the works of God might be displayed in him" (John 9:3). God's glory was revealed not despite the man's suffering, but through it. And this is what we must hold onto: Every moment of suffering—whether healed or not—is an opportunity for God to display His power, His presence, and His eternal purposes.

In 2020, as our team was finishing the writing of our song, "This Life," I received a diagnosis that terrified me. As a single, 20-year-old in college, I was told I would never be able to have children. The weight of that news was crushing. I mean, how do you grieve something you never even knew to long for? The suffering wasn't just physical—it was emotional, spiritual, and deeply personal. I didn't understand why God would allow this. Often times, when suffering comes, it leads with the question, "What good can come from this?" However, during this time in my life, the question deepened, and I could not help but ask, "Is God really good in this?" Over time, I began to see that God was using this suffering to shift my eyes to what was eternal.

I have personally seen God do great healing in my life, but regardless of what the result would have been from my health condition, I had to realize this truth—the abundant life Christ offers is not one free of hardship. It is not about getting everything we think we need. Instead, it is a life lived in surrender to His will, trusting that He will use every circumstance—whether in healing or in pain—to make His glory known. If our hope is rooted in temporary outcomes, we will always be disappointed. But if our hope is in Christ, we have a foundation that suffering cannot overcome.

One day, we will stand in the presence of the Lord, and every question, every sorrow, every moment of suffering will be swallowed up in His glory. But until then, we walk by faith. We trust that even when we cannot see or understand, God is working. God IS faithful, good, and loving, and it is simply impossible for Him to go against His character. So, we must fix our eyes on eternity, knowing that our present suffering is not the end of the story. The good that is coming from every ounce of suffering is God's redemption. It is, in fact, achieving something greater—the eternal glory of God being made known amongst all people.

**Application Question:** How does trusting in God's eternal glory change the way you view your present suffering?

**Further Reading:** John 9:1-7; Romans 8:18-25; 2 Corinthians 4:16-18

Written by Jaclyn Mains

## Day 8: Suffering With Christ

**Key Passage:** 2 Timothy 1:8

**Devotional:**

2 Timothy 1:8 states, “Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord, nor of me His prisoner, but share in suffering for the gospel by the power of God.”

Paul wrote these words from a Roman prison, awaiting his execution. By all earthly standards, his life seemed anything but abundant. Yet, he urged Timothy not to shrink back but to share in his suffering for the Gospel. Not to avoid it. Not to fear it. But to embrace it as part of following Christ.

This is not suffering as the world understands it. Everyone faces hardship—illness, loss, and pain. But the suffering Paul speaks of is different. It is the suffering that comes from boldly proclaiming Christ. It is the suffering of the believer in North Korea imprisoned for owning a Bible, the pastor in India beaten for preaching the gospel, the Christian in the Middle East who has lost family and livelihood for following Jesus. Around the world, believers are suffering—not for their own mistakes or misfortunes—but because they refuse to deny Christ. We also see it in the West, though it looks different. It is the business owner sued for refusing to compromise biblical convictions, the Christian ridiculed for rejecting progressive thinking, and it is the family member rejected for upholding the standards of their faith. The pressure to conform is real, and standing firm comes with a cost.

Yet, suffering is not only for those who believe. It also weighs on those who have never heard. Over 4 billion people remain unreached, living and dying without knowing the name of Jesus. If we believe Jesus is the only way to eternal life (John 14:6), then this lostness should burden us. And if preaching the gospel requires suffering—through rejection, sacrifice, or even persecution—then we should be willing.

The thief deceives us into thinking an abundant life is one about us and our own comfort. But Jesus offers something greater. True life is found in knowing Christ so deeply that even suffering becomes a privilege. Paul knew this, which is why he could sit in prison, awaiting death, and still declare, “I am not ashamed” (See 2 Timothy 1:12.). He had already gained everything in Christ—what else was there to lose?

If we have truly experienced the life Christ gives, then we cannot help but proclaim Him. Even if it costs us. Even if it hurts. Because He is worth it. And so are those who have yet to hear.

**Application Question:** In what ways are you tempted to avoid suffering for Christ? How can you stand firm in truth, trusting that God will use it for His glory?

**Further Reading:** Matthew 28:19-20; Romans 10:13-15; 2 Timothy 1:8-12

Written by Jaclyn Mains

# Week 3—Foundation

## Day 9: Built in Christ

**Key Passage:** 1 Peter 2:1-5

**Devotional:**

If you have ever watched a craftsman at work, you know that he does not randomly place materials together and hope for the best. He selects each piece carefully, knowing how it will fit into the final design. This is the image Peter paints for us here. God is the builder, and we are the stones He is shaping and placing into His spiritual house.

This image would have been striking to Peter’s original audience, as the spiritual house resembles the Old Testament temple. The temple was the dwelling place of God, where His presence rested among His people. Every stone was carefully chosen, every sacrifice was meticulously offered. But now, through Christ, the temple is no longer confined to a building in Jerusalem. We are the temple—living stones, built together by the hands of God Himself.

Think of the significance of this shift. In the Old Testament, only the high priest could enter into the Holy of Holies, and only once a year, bearing the blood of sacrifice. But now, through Christ’s perfect sacrifice, we have direct access to God. Christ did what no man could. Jesus was our great High Priest *because* He presented the most perfect sacrifice, Himself. As a result, we now have the Holy of Holies dwelling in us. We are not just visitors in His presence; we *are* His dwelling place. His Spirit lives in us, shaping us, refining us, making us more like Him.

But notice the process. Peter begins with a call to put away sin—malice, deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander. Why? Because these things erode the very foundation of our lives as God’s people. You cannot be built up in Christ while holding onto the patterns of your old nature. Sin will always weaken the structure God is building in you. Our eyes can only focus on one thing at a time.

Instead, Peter calls us to long for pure spiritual milk. Just as a newborn baby craves nourishment, we should hunger for God’s Word, specifically the truth of the Gospel, knowing that it is our source of life and growth. This isn’t optional; it’s necessary. Spiritual growth is not automatic. It requires daily surrender, daily feeding on the truth, and daily dependence on God.

And here’s the beautiful promise—God is not just calling us as individuals, but as a collective people. We are not isolated, scattered stones; we are being built together as a spiritual house. The church is not just a place we go—it is who we are. We are a holy priesthood, set apart to worship and serve God in a way that displays His glory to the world.

So today, ask yourself—*Are you allowing God to shape you into the person He is calling you to be? Are you clinging to old sins that keep you from growing? And are you longing for the nourishment of His Word so that you may be built up in Him?*

**Application Question:** What is one area of your life where you need to surrender sinful habits so that you may rightly represent the dwelling place of God?

**Further Reading:** Hebrews 5; Hebrews 10

Written by Jaclyn Mains

## Day 10: A Sure Foundation

**Key Passage:** 1 Peter 1:6

**Devotional:**

Every day, you are building your life on something. Maybe it's success, relationships, security, or personal achievements. But the question isn't *if* you are building—it's *what* you are building on. And not all foundations hold.

Peter reminds us that God Himself has laid the only foundation that will never fail—Jesus Christ, the chosen and precious Cornerstone. A cornerstone was the most important stone in ancient construction. It set the alignment, determined the stability, and held the structure together. Without a solid cornerstone, everything else was at risk.

Jesus is that Cornerstone. He is not just one option among many; He is the foundation God has established for salvation, purpose, and life itself. And the promise is clear: *Whoever believes in him will not be put to shame*. In a world where so much crumbles—dreams fade, people disappoint, and circumstances shift—those who stand on Christ will never be left hopeless or abandoned.

But trusting in this Cornerstone requires something from us. It means rejecting self-sufficiency and anchoring our lives in Him alone. It means building our identity, security, and hope on Christ, not on the unchanging standards of worldly success or personal effort.

So, what are you building on today? Are you resting in the sure foundation of Christ, or are you leaning on something that cannot hold you? The invitation is open—believe in Him, and you will never be put to shame.

**Application Question:** What foundation are you relying on in your daily life, and how can you more fully anchor yourself in Christ?

**Further Reading:** Isaiah 28:16; Matthew 7:24-27; 1 Corinthians 3:11

Written by Jaclyn Mains

## Day 11: The Precious Cornerstone

**Key Passage:** 1 Peter 2:7-8

**Devotional:**

What is most precious to you? We all treasure something—whether it’s security, relationships, reputation, comfort, or control. But Peter tells us in 1 Peter 2:7 that there is only one thing truly worthy of being called *precious*—Jesus Christ, the cornerstone.

To those who believe, Christ is infinitely valuable. He is the foundation on which our lives rest, the rock that upholds us, the sure place where we can stand. But to those who reject Him, He is a stumbling block—a stone that gets in the way of their own desires and ambitions. The same stone that is life and security for some is offense and inconvenience for others.

In Isaiah 28:16, God declares, “Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a tested stone, a precious cornerstone, of a sure foundation.” The Israelites knew this was a promise of the coming Messiah. He would be the permanent foundation of God’s kingdom. This was necessary because the old law was impossible to uphold. No matter how hard they tried, the Israelites failed to keep God’s commands. So, what the Israelites needed is what we all needed—a new law, a sole avenue that would save all people. Jesus came to fulfill what no man could—and He did so perfectly, making Him the immovable, permanent, and precious cornerstone. But the irony is this—when He arrived, many rejected Him. The very ones who had waited for the cornerstone stumbled over Him instead.

This is the tragedy of misplaced treasure. The world tells us to build our lives on success, comfort, or self-sufficiency, but all of those things crumble under pressure. Only Christ, the chosen and precious stone, remains firm. What we treasure shapes how we live. If Christ is our greatest treasure, then our lives will reflect His worth—we will gladly lay aside sin, surrender our plans, and find joy in obedience. But if we value something else more, we will find ourselves resisting Him, treating Him as an obstacle instead of our foundation.

The difference between those who build their lives on Christ and those who stumble over Him is not found in who Christ is—He remains the cornerstone either way. The difference is in our hearts. Have we truly seen His worth? Have we counted all else as loss compared to the surpassing value of knowing Him (See Philippians 3:8.)?

**Application Question:** Is Christ truly your cornerstone? What lesser treasures might be keeping you from seeing His surpassing worth?

**Further Reading:** Isaiah 28:16; Matthew 21:42-44; Philippians 3:8

Written by Jaclyn Mains

## Day 12: A People for His Own Possession

**Key Passage:** 1 Peter 2:9-10

**Devotional:**

We all long to belong. From the earliest days of human history, people have gathered in tribes, nations, and families, defining themselves by who they are and who they are not. But in 1 Peter 2:9-10, we see a clear declaration of identity—not based on ethnicity, nationality, or personal merit—but on God’s choosing.

These words resemble Exodus 19:5-6, where God spoke to Israel at Mount Sinai: “You shall be my treasured possession among all peoples... and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.” Israel was set apart, chosen not because of their greatness but because of God’s sovereign grace (See Deuteronomy 7:6-8.). They were meant to be a light to the nations, a priestly people mediating God’s presence to the world. But as history unfolded, Israel often misunderstood what it meant to be chosen, turning it into a mark of superiority rather than a mission. Ethnocentric pride crept in—they began to see their identity as an end rather than a means for global blessing.

But Peter’s words expand the vision. Through Christ, the people of God are no longer defined by ethnic boundaries. The Gospel breaks through the dividing walls, calling Jew and Gentile alike into one new people (See Ephesians 2:14-16.). No longer is God’s kingdom confined to a single nation; it is a global, multiethnic family formed by mercy, not ancestry. This is why Jesus, in Matthew 28:19-20, commands His disciples to, “...go and make disciples of all nations.” The mission that began with Israel now extends to every tribe, tongue, and people. The church is the fulfillment of God’s plan—to gather a people for Himself, not by bloodline, but by faith in Christ.

Peter’s words challenge any sense of superiority, reminding us that we were once outsiders, undeserving of mercy. We do not belong because of our goodness or background, but because God called us out of darkness. And now, as His chosen people, we have a purpose—to proclaim His excellencies to the world and to make known the mercy we have received.

**Application Question:** How does being a chosen people propel you forward to share in God’s Mission?

**Further Reading:** Exodus 19:5-6; Ephesians 2:11-22; Revelation 7:9-10

Written by Jaclyn Mains

# Week 4—Peace

## Day 13: I Shall Not Want

**Key Passage:** Psalm 23:1

**Devotional:**

“The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.” How many times have you read this verse but not actually considered its meaning? Because the Lord is our shepherd, we have no needs. We are lacking in nothing. Can you honestly say that you are totally content with your station in life and that nothing could be added or changed to make it more complete or comfortable? Maybe you are waiting on a test result to determine your next steps. Maybe you are working your tail off yet still struggling to keep the electricity on. What about the many prayers prayed asking the Lord to provide you with a spouse or for a child or for healing in a relationship? The reality is that we are in a broken world where we do have needs. A lot of needs, all the time. So, what does this verse reveal about God?

Let us consider sheep who are cared for by a shepherd. They are guided to nourishment, protected from predators and the elements, and are always watched over. Shepherds must constantly be with their flock—even sleeping outside and weathering difficult and dangerous storms with them. A flock of sheep are so familiar with their shepherd that they actually recognize their master’s voice and smell. His presence calms them in times of unfamiliarity or danger. These sheep are totally obsessed and highly dependent on their shepherd, and they have no wants. Now, let us consider Jesus Christ as our Great Shepherd. His Words are our nourishment and our protection—He guides us, and His presence is always with us. As you know and follow Jesus, His voice and His presence become so familiar that you can honestly say, “I have no needs because He is all that I need.”

This is a mighty claim. Many earthly things fight for your attention, but does Jesus hold your entire affection? Are you fully satisfied in Christ? John Piper is often quoted as saying, “God is most glorified when you are most satisfied in Him.” Do you delight in the Lord? Let us be people that are completely and utterly enamored by God’s loving kindness towards us. Do you desire Jesus above all else? Psalm 37:4 says to “...delight yourself in the Lord, and He will give you the desires of your heart.” As you seek to know and follow Jesus, He will give you the desires of your heart because your heart will be aligned with the Father’s.

Today, seek the Father’s heart. When you seek first the kingdom of God, your perspective on life will have a heavenly lens. Earthly needs are a reality, and the Lord hears every prayer and knows what burdens us. We need the Holy Spirit to give us a heavenly perspective that God is faithful, and He is our perfect provider. As Piper puts it, “The glory of Jesus dims all distractions.” Be in awe of God and allow His presence to be your consuming passion. Here is where you will have no want.

**Application Question:** What distractions must I lay aside in order to give Jesus my full affection? What must I surrender today to earnestly say, *I shall not want*?

**Further Reading:** Psalm 37; Matthew 6:33; Hebrews 12:1-3

Written by Sarah West



## Day 14: Here With the Shepherd King

**Key Passage:** Psalm 23:2-3

**Devotional:**

God never sleeps and He never needs to rest, yet after He created the heavens and earth and all creation, He rested. Why? Because He delights in His work. Our Good Father modeled for us how we should form our lives. Prior to the fall, God's perfect design was for man and all of creation to regularly rest and reset—a rhythm of submission. Yet, in our fallen state, we rebel against this God-given model. We boast about how many hours of unused vacation time is in the timebank. We praise new mothers who are out doing errands with their weeks-old baby. We celebrate a lifestyle of excess and busyness, and in our prideful thinking, we say, "I'll sleep when I'm dead." How do we find peace in a world like this?

*He makes me lie down in green pastures*—God has commanded sabbath rest to be a regular rhythm of submission, where we acknowledge that we cannot—without the Lord. Sabbath rest gives us the opportunity to humble ourselves to our limitations and to elevate the Lord and His ability. A weekly rhythm of acknowledging that we are not in control.

*He leads me beside still waters. He restores my soul*—Allow the Lord to lead you and allow the Word to continually renew your mind. Christ is the continual source of life. Remember His words that whoever drinks from His waters will never thirst (See John 4:14.).

*He leads me in paths of righteousness for His name's sake*—When you reorient your entire lifestyle to accommodate for God's sabbath rest, He will bless you for His righteousness' sake. It takes effort and intentionality to complete all of life's responsibilities in six days and to rest on the seventh, but in Jesus' own words, He says, "Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls," (See Matthew 11:29.). At times, you will have to fight for this Sabbath rest—the world despises Him—but cling to the truth that it is for your good and His glory.

If we are to experience peace for our souls, we must rest in Christ's work. Today, surrender to His perfect design of Sabbath; allow Jesus to lead you to rest and for His Word to restore you. How you submit to rest shows the world that you are not of this world. Praise God that in His perfect design of rest, we can advance the kingdom of God!

**Application Question:** What can you do today to embrace your limitations? What change can you make right now to prioritize a literal Sabbath?

**Further Reading:** Genesis 2; Matthew 11:28-30; John 4; Romans 12:2; 2 Corinthians 12

Written by Sarah West

## Day 15: Grieving With Our Future Hope

**Key Passages:** Psalm 23:4; Isaiah 26:3

**Devotional:**

*God, how could You? How could You allow me to experience such uncontainable joy and giddy elation knowing that in your sovereignty, this excitement would never come into fruition? How could You allow deep dread and fear to sink my soul to the depths of depression? How could You allow me to hope for good things to come with unhindered confidence, knowing that the plans I crafted would never come to be? How could You allow this miscarriage? What did I do wrong? In the fog of loss, the one verse that came to mind almost seemed to mock me...“You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in you” (Isaiah 26:3). Haven’t I trusted in You, Lord? I am deep in the valley of the shadow of death. Where are you God?*

Everything in my flesh wanted to retreat inward, to be private within my suffering and to disassociate. But God in His goodness provided me with close counsel that would go into the depths with me. They comforted me and pointed me to Christ’s comfort. They grieved with me and allowed me to process my pain and confusion without judgement. Although painful and uncomfortable, I shared about my loss before I felt ready to do so, and in that vulnerability, God showed me His loving kindness in others’ sympathy.

Everything in my flesh wanted to run from God, but I remembered Psalm 23, that in deep darkness, I do not have to be afraid of what I might find because Jesus promised to be with me. Christ’s presence is all that I need. His Word is firm guidance. It protects me in darkness, where I cannot see the light. As I am in tune with God’s heart and sense His presence, I can take the next step, knowing that I do not need to know the following step. As my mind is fixed on Christ and His unchanging character, I can trust that He is infinitely good, infinitely faithful, infinitely loving, infinitely sovereign. I can trust that Jesus Himself will keep me in perfect peace. God does the keeping. I do the trusting. I do not have to be afraid of darkness, depression, or even death because I know that I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

Today, how can you lean into the difficult and the hard? Everything in our flesh wants to run away from the valley but remember that the Lord desires to walk with you through the darkness and He wants to celebrate with you on the mountain top. God delights to stand with you at the overlook, enjoying the view of what your perseverance has produced. God wants to strengthen your faith, to build your character for eternity’s purposes, and to sanctify you for His glory. Today, have a heavenly perspective in your suffering.

**Application Question:** What hard thing is the Lord calling you to lean into today?

**Further Reading:** Matthew 11:28-30; 1 Peter 4

Written by Sarah West

## Day 16: Embrace Heavenly Hospitality

**Key Passage:** Psalm 23:5-6

**Devotional:**

Let us think about the parable of the Great Banquet—everyone is invited to come and feast—but not all will accept the invitation. Imagine working so diligently to create an elaborate meal for people who are starving, yet when it is time to eat, no one will put food in their mouths or even sit at the table. This is a picture of enemies of the cross who foolishly scorn the righteous while their own bellies growl and their mouths salivate. In their arrogant pride, they curse you and ultimately curse God.

Notice in Psalm 23:5 that God allows enemies of the cross to see you feast at the Lord's table. This feast is not just our eventual heavenly feast with the Son, but we are anointed and set aside now for abundant life. So, while we are in this earthly shell, remember that your enemies are watching how you enjoy God's hospitality. As you embrace the abundant life, you are showing them what it looks like to belong to Christ, to be nourished by His Word, and to be in intimate fellowship with Him.

The reality is that God does not call us to His table only when we are celebrating, but also when we are mourning. Enemies of the cross are watching to see if the crushing darkness of the valley will break your union. How you handle suffering is a testament of God's goodness and mercy. When you are faithful to dine with the Lord even in suffering, you are inviting enemies to become friends. You are displaying that the life you live in the flesh is for the Son of God who loved you and gave Himself for you.

Today, let us persevere with heavenly perspective. Cling to the Lord and trust that you can always rejoice at God's table because the suffering you experience will produce a character that is oriented for eternity.

**Application Question:** What scripture can you guard your mind with that will orient your thoughts towards eternity?

**Further Reading:** Luke 14; John 4; Romans 5; Galatians 2:20

Written by Sarah West

# Week 5—Valley

## Day 17: Christ's Victory Over Death

**Key Passage:** Isaiah 53

**Devotional:**

Depression...let's be honest about it. Until recently, it was something that many followers of Jesus avoided talking about, and even more so, avoided admitting to struggling with it. It was the proverbial skeleton in the closet, meaning if it wasn't talked about, it didn't exist. It was, and still at times is, associated with a lack of faith or trust in the Lord. Nothing could be further from the truth. And while the Bible doesn't use the word "depression" in the way we do today, it speaks a lot about despair, sorrow, and hope. People like David, Job, and Paul experienced deep emotional struggles and seasons of darkness, yet they found victory in God.

Pain, sorrow, trials, hardships, grief, and so many other emotions that can lead to a season of depression, are real. What if you knew that Jesus understood pain, and He understands your pain? Isaiah 53:3 says, "He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces, he was despised..." There is no evidence that Jesus struggled with depression, but the Bible clearly points to Jesus understanding the emotional weight of the world. That is why in Matthew 6, Jesus could say "'Do not be anxious about your life,'" (v.25) and "'Do not be anxious about tomorrow,'" (v.34). A further dive into the biblical text shows verse after verse that point to a greater hope and victory over depression.

Some examples:

**Psalm 34:18-** "The LORD is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit."

**Psalm 42:11-** "Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you in turmoil within me? Hope in God; for I shall again praise him, my salvation and my God."

**Philippians 4:6-7-** "Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God, and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."

**2 Corinthians 12:9-** "But he said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.'"

The darkness of this world wasn't and isn't foreign to Jesus. He experienced it in the flesh. He truly empathizes with the depth of human emotion. God doesn't want you consumed by your despair, sorrow, or grief. He wants you to fully know that by His grace and power you can be triumphant over the burdens of this world. Yes, those feelings are real, but they don't have to define you. Let the victory found in Jesus be what defines you.

**Application Question:** What is weighing you down and possibly fostering depression in your life? What do you need to do to lean into the Lord and experience victory (prayer, mentorship, time with God's Word)?

**Further Reading:** Philippians 2

Written by Eric Heatherly

## Day 18: Made Alive in Christ

**Key Passage:** Matthew 9

**Devotional:**

For a moment think about the last time you were in a crowd. What thoughts, if any, did you have about or for the people who made up the crowd? Did the presence of the crowd prompt any sort of emotional response or were you contextually numb to those around you? These questions likely feel quite random because, let's be honest, how often does someone think about the last crowd they were in? One could assume that ultimately the crowd bustled with life. But, what if many in the crowd were actually "dead men walking," feeling helpless and hopeless? And what if you realized this?

Many times, we avoid such lofty questions, often due to laziness, a lack of compassion for others, busyness, or self-centeredness. But how would Jesus see the crowd? That's a challenging question. Now, we never want to assume what Jesus would or would not do. That said, the Scripture does give us an account of Jesus interacting with a crowd. In Matthew 9, Jesus is going through towns and villages teaching the Good News and healing people. Verse 36 says, "When He saw the crowds, He had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then He said to His disciples, 'The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore, pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.'" Jesus wasn't just a part of the crowd; He saw the crowd. He saw beyond the number. He saw the people and it prompted an emotional, practical response from the Lord.

The burdens of this world are weighing down those who are either unaware or have been unresponsive to the temporary and eternal victory found only in Jesus Christ. In his letter to the Colossian church, Paul emphasized the transformative power and victory that comes when someone finds their identity in Jesus. He wrote, "And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses" (See Colossians 2:13.). The crowd of people that surrounds us today is filled with people who are grasping for an identity that will bring victory. That's why they need followers of Jesus to see the crowd as Jesus did—filled with compassionate, prayerful laborers for the hope, and victory found only when someone is made alive in Christ.

**Application Question:** Who will you be? Will you be someone who lacks compassion for the crowd, or will you see the crowd through the lens of the Holy Spirit?

**Further Reading:** Colossians 2

Written by Eric Heatherly

## Day 19: Healing From Brokenness

**Key Passage:** Isaiah 61

**Devotional:**

God's nature is to bring healing and restoration to humanity. It's the heart, maybe even better said, the mission, for why Jesus came in the flesh. We see this in Luke 4. As Jesus begins His ministry, He quotes Isaiah 61. Jesus said, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor" (Luke 4:18-19). The Bible speaks extensively about healing from brokenness and God's power to restore us.

Here's the good news—God doesn't just mend what is broken; that alone would be more than we deserve. But He goes to the next level. He restores us through faith in His Son Jesus. His heart for this is evident throughout the Old and New Testament. Here are a few examples:

**Psalms 147:3-** "He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds."

**Joel 2:25-** "I will restore to you the years that the swarming locust has eaten..."

**Jeremiah 30:17-** "For I will restore health to you, and your wounds I will heal..."

**Acts 3:19-21-** "Repent therefore, and turn back, that your sins may be blotted out, that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that he may send the Christ appointed to you, Jesus, whom heaven must receive until the time for restoring all things about which God spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets long ago."

A season of depression and brokenness may feel unending, making it hard to remember that God's heart is to make a way for you into a refreshing, new season. God had this to say through the prophet Isaiah, "Remember not the former things, nor consider the things of old. Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers and desert" (Isaiah 43:18-19).

Healing from brokenness is part of the transformation that comes from being in Christ. He turns pain into purpose. God's grace is sufficient to heal your wounds, overcome your brokenness, and lead you into a renewed life. And He doesn't "just" heal you—He restores you for His glory.

**Application Question:** What in your life needs God's restoration?

**Further Reading:** Luke 4

Written by Eric Heatherly

## Day 20: Living in His Triumph

**Key Passage:** Colossians 2:13-15

**Devotional:**

Colossians 2:13-15 says,

"And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him."

This passage is a powerful reminder of the triumph we have in Jesus Christ. But what does it mean to live in the triumph of Jesus Christ?

Here's what it means:

**First, we experience new life in Christ.** We were once spiritually dead, but now we are alive in Christ. Our past sins no longer define us because of His resurrection power. In Ephesians 2, we are told, "And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world" (v.1). It goes on to say that we were sons of disobedience and by nature, children of wrath. Thankfully it continues and explains, "But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus" (vv.4-6).

**Second, we experience total forgiveness in Christ.** Every sin—past, present, and future, has been forgiven. The debt we owed has been completely erased by Jesus' sacrifice. Paul wrote, "In him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace" (Ephesians 1:7). By His grace all our sin is forgiven. Psalm 32:5 says, "I acknowledged my sin to you, and I did not cover my iniquity; I said, 'I will confess my transgressions to the LORD,'" and you forgave the iniquity of my sin."

**Third, we experience victory over the enemy in Christ.** Jesus has disarmed and defeated the powers of darkness. Satan has no legal claim over us because of the cross. We live in freedom, not fear. Jesus proclaimed in John 12:46, "I have come into the world as light, so that whoever believes in me may not remain in darkness."

**Fourth, we experience walking triumphantly in Christ.** Since Christ has already won the victory, we are called to live with boldness, confidence, and faith, knowing that nothing can separate us from His love. Romans 8:38-39 declares that NOTHING in heaven or earth "...will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Living in the triumph of Jesus means embracing His victory every day—rejecting condemnation, standing firm in faith, and walking in the freedom He secured for us. His triumph is our triumph!

**Application Question:** How do you see this victory shaping your daily life?

**Further Reading:** Ephesians 2

Written by Eric Heatherly

# Week 6— I Claim the Cross

## Day 21: The Death of Self

**Key Passage:** Philippians 3:8

**Devotional:**

Paul’s radical statement in Philippians 3:8, “I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord,” illuminates a truth that is all at once freeing and terrifying. To know Christ, we must destroy the idol of self.

That may not seem to be the main point at first reading but think about it—our flesh clings to self-righteousness, self-confidence, and even self-pity. We try to prove our worth, control, and earn our own sanctification, and inevitably despair when we fail. But Paul calls all of these things, and anything else we could claim as worth, to be “rubbish” compared to Christ.

The Puritan John Owen gives this grave advice: “Be killing sin or it will be killing you.” Self-righteousness blinds us to our need for grace. Self-confidence tempts us to trust in our own strength rather than in Christ. Self-pity convinces us that our failures define us more than the cross does. If we allow for any of these “sins of self” to take root in our lives, we slowly begin to focus on them more than anything else.

Yet, we cannot brute force kill our sin—it is only through the Lord’s work of sanctification. Many attempt to conquer sin by sheer effort—modifying behavior, setting rigid rules, and disciplining themselves into something that looks better on the outside. But this kind of life is what Jesus would call a “whitewashed tomb.” While discipline has its place, transformation does not come from willpower alone. We don’t simply need to be made clean; we need to be made new! Jesus emphasizes this in John 14:15 & 21: “If you love me, you will keep my commandments... And he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him.” Notice the order: **Love comes first, then obedience follows**. Obedience is not a self-willed effort to prove ourselves to God; it is a response to knowing Him.

To live the crucified life, to “claim the cross,” we must daily ask, “What am I clinging to that keeps me from knowing Christ more?” The cross strips us of false security and invites us into full dependence on Jesus. As the distractions of self-idolatry and sin are removed, we see more clearly the beauty of Christ, fall more in love with our Savior, and are transformed to be more like Him.

**Application Question:** What aspects of “self” are keeping you from deeper communion with Christ?

**Further Reading:** John 14; Philippians 3:7-8

Written by Jordan West



## Day 22: The Painful, Effective Cross

**Key Passage:** Philippians 3:10

### **Devotional:**

The cross is not just a moment of salvation—it is a daily experience. Not only does Jesus command His followers to “take up your cross daily,” but also Paul embraces this crucified life saying, “...that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and may share His sufferings, becoming like Him in His death” (Philippians 3:10).

Sadly, many people try to claim the cross in vain. They will say they are “Christians,” but what they mean is nothing more than that they have adopted a moralistic ethic and occasionally go to church. When they do go, it is often out of duty and not out of a place of delight. There is no true change or transformation. A.W. Tozer reflects on this by saying, “The cross is painful, but it is effective.” To truly pick up our cross daily, no matter how painful it is, a part of us will die, and we will be fully dependent on Christ for life.

Though the gospel does not end in death, there is no resurrection without the cross, no sanctification without suffering, and no victory without surrender. John MacArthur reminds us, “True Christians are transformed people. They manifest righteousness and are commanded to continually manifest more of that righteousness.” The cross is like a surgeon’s scalpel—it cuts, but it heals. It exposes the sin within us, but it also removes it.

Suffering with Christ means more than enduring hardship—it means embracing the refining process. It is trusting that even when God allows trials, He is shaping us into the image of His Son.

Let this be a prayer for us today:

*I claim the cross  
I'll suffer with the Christ that I adore  
To crucify the life I lived before  
I claim the cross  
I claim the grave put to death my flesh and all its ways  
Its bondage broken full in Heaven's gaze  
I claim the grave*

*I claim the cross  
My whole heart seeks the Savior's steps  
In suffering I will join the Savior's rest  
I claim the cross  
I claim new life  
Death defeated in His sacrifice  
His life is given up as mine  
I claim new life”*

**Application Question:** How is God using suffering to refine and sanctify you?

**Further Reading:** Romans 5:3-5; Philippians 3:10; Hebrews 12:10-11

Written by Jordan West

## Day 23: Pressing Toward Resurrection Life

**Key Passage:** Philippians 3:12-14

**Devotional:**

Paul was never content with complacency. The Christian life is one of continuous movement: “I press on to make it my own because Christ Jesus has made me His own” (Philippians 3:12). His desire to grow in sanctification was not rooted in a need to earn God’s love but in the reality that Jesus had already made him His own. Our motivation for godliness must likewise come from being loved by God, not from striving to earn His love.

So how do we participate in sanctification? How do we press on? First, we must understand the proper order of events. Sanctification—a word often used in church circles—is described by Jesus as the “pruning of a vine” (see John 15). A dead and withered plant cannot be pruned; it must be uprooted entirely.

“Yet while we were dead in our sins, Christ died for us—not because of any effort on our part but solely by His grace. Behold! If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation” (See 2 Corinthians 5:17.). We are alive because of Christ’s love and sacrifice. Our response, then, is love-fueled obedience.

While our works do not save us, we are not passive in sanctification. As Kevin DeYoung explains, “We are not passive in sanctification. God works in us, and we work out that work. But we do so in reliance upon the Spirit’s enabling.” Resurrection life is not merely something we await in eternity—it is something we begin to live now. However, to walk in this new life, we must leave behind what hinders us (See Philippians 3:13.). Whether it be past sins, self-righteousness, or failures, the Christian life calls for forward movement.

It is not about achieving perfection but about perseverance. Our goal is not to “arrive” but to press on, to crucify the self—daily—and to walk in step with Christ.

**Song Reflection:** “If suffering in the present means glory in His presence/ Then I claim, I claim Jesus’ holy name”

**Application Question:** What do you need to “forget” in order to press forward toward Christ?

**Further Reading:** John 15; 2 Corinthians 3:18; Philippians 3:12-14; Hebrews 12:1-2

Written by Jordan West

## Day 24: The Hope of Transformation

**Key Passage:** Philippians 3:20-21

**Devotional:**

Philippians 3 almost paints a bleak picture of the believer's journey. Are we called to seek out suffering? Is that the goal? If the Christian life ended in suffering, it would be unbearable. But Paul reminds us, "Our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body" (Philippians 3:20-21).

The cross is not our final destination—resurrection is. Sanctification is hard, and dying to self is painful, but God has promised transformation. What we endure now is preparing us for something far greater. As Paul writes, "...this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison" (2 Corinthians 4:17). What wonderful hope! No matter what trials we face, our true home and our Savior are waiting for us in Heaven.

Our response to suffering and sin is not to minimize their weight but to magnify our view of God. John Owen reminds us, "He that hath slight thoughts of sin never had great thoughts of God." When we see Christ rightly, the struggles of this world grow dim. When our view of God is great, we can face suffering through the lens of hope.

By embracing the pain and trials of the crucified life, we also claim the promise of resurrection. The veil of self is removed. Suffering produces sanctification. And ultimately, the cross leads us to glory in His presence.

So, we press on—not as those without hope—but as those awaiting a Savior, knowing that every hardship will one day be swallowed up in resurrection life.

**Application Question:** How does the promise of future transformation encourage you in your walk today?

**Further Reading:** Romans 8:18-19; 2 Corinthians 4:16-18; Philippians 3:20-21

Written by Jordan West

# Week 7—Friend of Sinners

## Day 25: Jesus, the Friend of Sinners

**Key Passage:** Luke 19:1-10

**Devotional:**

Zacchaeus was an outsider. He was a tax collector, a man of wealth built on corruption, and an outcast among his own people. Tax collectors were notorious for betraying their own communities, working for the oppressive Roman government, and extorting their fellow Jews by overcharging taxes and pocketing the excess. It's no surprise that people wanted nothing to do with him. He wasn't just disliked; he was despised. Yet, as Jesus passed through Jericho, He saw Zacchaeus—a wee little man 😊—perched in a sycamore tree, desperate for a glimpse of the Savior. Rather than ignoring or avoiding him, Jesus called him by name: “Zacchaeus, hurry and come down, for I must stay at your house today” (Luke 19:5).

Jesus' love for sinners is scandalous. He doesn't merely tolerate them; He pursues them. The crowd grumbled in protest, appalled that Jesus would willingly enter the home of a tax collector, let alone befriend him. But Jesus was never concerned with religious appearances. His mission was not exclusion but redemption.

Zacchaeus' response to Christ's invitation was radical. He repented, vowing to restore fourfold what he had stolen. The grace of Jesus never leaves us as it finds us. His pursuit transforms us, calling us to forsake our old ways and walk in newness of life. This means that a true follower of Christ not only abandons the sin they carried before but also is given Christ's love and heart for broken sinners around them.

Jesus' final words in this passage encapsulate this purpose: “For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost” (Luke 19:10). It's easy to distance ourselves from the crowds who despised Jesus for this mission. It's even easier to distance ourselves from Zacchaeus—to convince ourselves that we are more deserving of Christ's friendship than he was. But when measured against God's holiness, we see the truth. We, too, were once distant from God, clinging to sin, unable to reach Him on our own. And yet, while we were still sinners, Christ called us by name. He made the first move to bring us into friendship with God. The question is: How will we respond?

**Song Reflection:** “With one death, my debt is paid/And death will fade away/The Friend of Sinners is holy”

**Application Question:** Who in your life do you view as beyond the reach of grace? How can you reflect Christ's heart for sinners this week?

**Further Reading:** Luke 19:1-10

Written by Jordan West

## Day 26: Baptism—Immersed in the Name

**Key Passage:** Romans 6:3-5

**Devotional:**

Baptism is far more than a religious ritual; it is an act of obedience, a public declaration of faith, and a profound spiritual reality. Paul writes, “Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death” (Romans 6:3). This means that baptism is not just an event; it is an identification with Christ’s death, burial, and resurrection.

Now, allow me to be mildly nerdy for a moment. The Greek word for baptize, **βαπτίζω** (*baptizō*), means “to immerse” or “to submerge.” This is no coincidence; baptism visually represents a burial and resurrection. When someone is lowered into the water, it signifies the death of their old self, enslaved to sin. When they rise, it symbolizes their new life in Christ, free from the bondage of sin.

As a Baptist, I firmly believe that baptism involves full immersion in water, and I also believe that it is a practice the Church should uphold. However, there is more to baptism than just the water. Jesus Himself connects baptism to discipleship in Matthew 28:19-20, commanding His followers to “...make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.” This means that baptism is not just a ritual—it is a declaration of belonging.

John the Baptist understood this distinction. He made it clear that while he baptized with water, the One who came after him, Jesus, would baptize with the Spirit. Water baptism is the outward sign, but true baptism is about full identification with the name of God. It is not just about being immersed in water; it is about being immersed in Christ.

Paul deepens this understanding in Romans 6:4, saying, “We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.” Baptism marks the death of the old self and the beginning of a new life—one that is completely defined by Jesus.

To be baptized is to embrace a new identity—not one shaped by our past, our failures, or even our own efforts, but one grounded in Christ alone.

**Song Reflection:** “Washed with water/This covenant is ratified with You/I’ll follow You until my life is through”

**Application Question:** Are there areas of your life that look more like your old self than they look like Jesus?

**Further Reading:** Matthew 28:18-20; Romans 6:3-5

Written by Jordan West

## Day 27: The Lord's Supper—A Table of Grace

**Key Passage:** 1 Corinthians 11:23-26

**Devotional:**

On the night before His crucifixion, Jesus gathered with His disciples and instituted what we now call the Lord's Supper. Taking the bread, He broke it, saying, "This is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me" (1 Corinthians 11:24).

This moment was layered with meaning. The bread and the cup were not just symbols; they pointed to the suffering Jesus was about to endure. His body would be broken. His blood would be poured out. But notice something striking—the disciples did not take the bread for themselves; Jesus broke it and gave it to them. He offered it freely to a table full of sinners.

Judas would soon betray Him. The rest of the disciples would scatter in fear. Peter would flat-out deny even knowing Him. And yet, Jesus still offered them the bread of His body. He still poured the wine, a symbol of His perfect life, and told them it could be counted as their own. The cross was not an accident; it was the plan of redemption unfolding.

Communion is a time of remembrance, but it is also a moment of renewal. Paul warns the Corinthians to examine themselves before partaking in the Lord's Supper, reminding them that this is not just another meal—it is a declaration of Christ's death until He returns (See 1 Corinthians 11:26.). This sacred act forces us to pause, reflect, and remember that Jesus has made a way for us to be in communion—friendship—with Him.

When we take the Lord's Supper, we look back and remember that our salvation was costly. Our friendship with Christ cost Him His life. But we also look ahead, His death is not the end of the story. He rose again, conquering sin and the grave. And now, our Savior and our Friend prepares another table, a greater feast, the wedding supper of the Lamb, where the Church will enter into glory and dine with Him forever (See Revelation 19:9.).

**Song Reflection:** "Your body broken/You offered me the bread and poured the wine/Your holiness imparted there as mine"

**Application Question:** How does The Lord's Supper deepen your understanding of Christ's sacrifice and your anticipation of His return?

**Further Reading:** 1 Corinthians 11:23-26; Revelation 19

Written by Jordan West

## Day 28: Jesus Washes the Feet of His Disciples

**Key Passage:** John 13:12-17

**Devotional:**

On the night before His betrayal, Jesus did something unexpected. The Son of God, the One through whom all things were made, took a towel, knelt before His disciples, and washed their feet. This was not just an act of kindness; it was a complete role reversal. In first-century Jewish culture, foot-washing was the work of a servant, not a teacher, and certainly not a king. Yet Jesus humbled Himself and took the lowest place.

When He finished, He asked His disciples, “Do you understand what I have done to you?” (John 13:12). Then He commanded them, “If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet” (v.14).

I am sure this moment was difficult for the disciples to immediately understand. However, Paul expands on what it means in Philippians 2:5-8: “Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though He was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.” Jesus didn’t just wash feet; He gave up His divine privileges, stepped into the dirt of our world, and offered Himself up for our salvation.

This is the model He gives us: True greatness is not found in status, power, or recognition, but in humility and sacrificial love. If the King of Kings took on the role of a servant, how much more should we serve one another? To follow Christ means to embrace His posture. We must adopt His heart of humility, lay down our pride, set aside entitlement, and choose obedience no matter the cost. If we are to truly love Christ and understand the Gospel, our lives should be in complete devotion to Him and His mission to seek and save the lost.

**Song Reflection:** “Friend of sinners/You stooped down to wash my feet/You prepared a place to dine here with me”

**Application Question:** What is one way you can humble yourself and serve others this week?

**Further Reading:** John 13:12-17; Philippians 2:5-8

Written by Jordan West

# Week 8—Adonai

## Day 29: Living Sacrificially

**Key Passage:** Galatians 2:20

**Devotional:**

What does it mean to live a life of sacrifice—to have the posture of offering ourselves to God? To live a life of sacrifice for God means to surrender our desires, ambitions, and comforts for His greater purpose. It's having an attitude of selflessness. It's desiring to live our life for His glory and His purposes. It's not simply about giving up things but about offering ourselves—our time, resources, and hearts—as an act of worship. Romans 12:1 reminds us, “I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.”

Jesus Himself set the ultimate example of sacrificial living. He humbled Himself, became obedient to death on a cross (See Philippians 2:8.), and gave everything so that we might have life. As His followers, we are called to take up our cross daily (See Luke 9:23.), choosing His will over our own. This is key—to have an attitude like that of Christ Jesus (See Philippians 2:3-7.).

Here's a reality check—sacrificial living is not always easy, but it is deeply fulfilling. When we trust God enough to surrender, He provides for our needs (See Matthew 6:33.) and fills us with a joy that the world cannot offer. True sacrifice is not loss—it is gain, as we exchange temporary things for eternal rewards (See Mark 10:29-30.). When we realize that sacrifice isn't loss, it does become easier.

**Application Question:** What are some steps you need to take to daily seek to live a life that reflects Christ's love, offering yourself fully to God in faith and obedience?

**Further Reading:** Romans 12

Written by Eric Heatherly



## Day 30: A Broken and Contrite Heart

**Key Passage: Psalm 57:17**

**Devotional:**

What if you could actually bring delight to God through your attitude and actions? What if the desires and posture of your heart delighted the Lord? This is possible! In fact, the Bible paints a clear picture of what this looks like.

The Bible speaks highly of having a contrite heart, emphasizing that God values humility, repentance, and brokenness over pride and self-sufficiency. A contrite heart refers to a heart that is deeply sorry for sin, sincerely seeking forgiveness and restoration with God.

Here are some key scriptures that highlight what it means to have a contrite heart and how it brings delight to God:

Psalm 57:17 says, “The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.” Psalm 57 is a psalm of repentance, written by King David after the prophet Nathan confronted him about his adultery with Bathsheba. What is seen in this psalm, and particularly in verse 17, is that God values a humble and repentant heart.

Isaiah 57:15 says, “For thus says the One who is high and lifted up, who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: I dwell in the high and lofty place, and also with him who is of a contrite and lowly spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly, and to revive the heart of the contrite.” Have you ever felt that sin has destroyed your connection to God? While it’s true that sin does hurt our relationship with our holy Father in Heaven, the prophet Isaiah points out that God promises to be near to those who are humble and contrite, bringing renewal and restoration. God hates sin but embraces authentic repentance.

In Luke 18, Jesus illustrates how God justifies those who are truly repentant and humble. He says, “But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me, a sinner!’ I tell you, this man went down to his house justified, rather than the other. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted.” That’s awesome! When we are truly repentant and humble, God will exalt us.

A contrite heart is one that recognizes its own sinfulness, deeply repents, and seeks God's mercy. The Bible assures us that God draws near to such a heart, forgives, restores, and lifts it up.

**Application Question:** Is there sin that you’re clinging to right now? If so, what is keeping you from repentance?

**Further Reading:** Luke 18

Written by Eric Heatherly

## Day 31: Transformation in Christ

**Key Passage:** Romans 12:1-2

**Devotional:**

The Book of Romans is one of the longest writings that we have from the Apostle Paul. Written sometime between 50 and 60 C.E., one of its key focuses is the Gospel and its impact on both the individual and the Church. The Bible Project states that the theme for Romans is how “...faith in Jesus creates new humans who are liberated to become a people characterized by love for God and their neighbors. This new humanity is transformed by God’s Spirit and is the fulfillment of God’s ancient promises.” Following Jesus is about renewal that comes solely through the work of the Holy Spirit.

So how should we understand transformation and the renewing of the mind? Romans 12:1-2 says, “I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.” There are several elements within the passage that help define transformation and renewing of the mind.

**First, be a living sacrifice.** Paul urges followers of Jesus to offer themselves fully to God, not just in religious rituals but in a life wholly dedicated to Him.

**Second, do not conform to the ways of this world.** Followers of Jesus are called to a higher standard that is shaped by God’s truth. The world operates under a different standard that opposes God’s way.

**Third, be transformed.** Literally. A complete change from the inside out.

**Fourth, experience renewing of the mind.** The renewal process involves replacing worldly thinking with God’s truth so that we may see life from His perspective.

**Lastly, lean into the discernment of God’s will.** A transformed mind leads to wisdom and spiritual clarity, which should guide one’s decisions and actions to a place of alignment with God’s purposes.

What are some steps to bring all of this about?

(1) Spend time with Scripture; (2) Pray for the leading of the Holy Spirit; (3) Be discipled by a more mature follower of Jesus; (4) Be intentional to reject the things of this world that will lead you away from Jesus.

Through Jesus Christ, transformation is not just an improvement but a complete renewal, leading us to live in a way that glorifies God and fulfills His purpose for our lives.

**Application Question:** What steps that lead to transformation and renewal need attention in your life?

**Further Reading:** 1 Corinthians 12

Written by Eric Heatherly

## Day 32: Our Lives as Offerings

**Key Passage:** Romans 12:1

**Devotional:**

Being a living sacrifice, as described in Romans 12:1, means surrendering ourselves completely to God in worship, obedience, and daily devotion. Unlike the Old Testament sacrifices where animals were physically offered on the altar, a living sacrifice is a continual, voluntary commitment to God—giving Him control over every aspect of our lives.

Key Aspects of Being a Living Sacrifice include:

**1. Total Surrender**

Luke 9:23 says, “And He said to all, ‘If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.’” This means that we are to put aside selfish ambitions and submit to God’s authority daily.

**2. Holiness and Transformation**

Romans 12:2 tells us, “Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind.” To live a life of sacrifice means letting go of worldly values and allowing God to reshape our thinking, desires, and actions.

**3. Worship as a Lifestyle**

In Colossians 3:17, the Apostle Paul wrote, “And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.” Worship isn’t just about singing or attending church—it’s how we live every moment in obedience and gratitude to God.

**4. Daily Commitment, not a One-Time Event**

Unlike Old Testament sacrifices, which were one-time offerings, a living sacrifice is ongoing. Every day, we choose to live for God rather than for ourselves. Galatians 2:20 says, “I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me.” A life of sacrifice is a daily commitment to letting Jesus guide and direct our lives rather than following our own desires.

**5. Service to Others**

Being a living sacrifice is not just about personal holiness; it also involves serving others with love. Philippians 2:3-4 says, “Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.”

To be a living sacrifice means to daily offer yourself to God in worship, obedience, and service—choosing His will over your own. It’s a lifelong journey of transformation where we live for God’s glory rather than our own.

**Application Question:** How can you take a step today towards a life of daily sacrifice to God?

**Further Reading:** Colossians 3

Written by Eric Heatherly