



Canadian Bible Society

The Word. For Life.

Words of Comfort

Bible Verses of Hope for Tough Times

Dear friend,

The Bible is an unusual book in so many ways.

The Scriptures have sometimes been described as an instruction book for life, and they do indeed provide important wisdom and guidance from our Creator about the best way to live fulfilling and happy lives. But while most instruction booklet and self-help guides presume quite a bit from those who read them, the Bible speaks to us exactly where we are, with a striking realism about how difficult life so often is.

It speaks to the hurting, the broken and those who have little apparent hope.

Its stories, promises and advice were not meant for the wealthy and educated who have it all together and feel like they are on top of the world. Many of the words of comfort it contains are spoken by individuals who met with loss, calamity and heartache themselves – and surprisingly, they often speak these insightful words from the midst of their greatest trouble.

You may well recognize your own circumstances as you read about theirs, and as you do, we pray that the comfort they found in God would also be an encouragement to you.

Many of the passages from the Scriptures we have included in this booklet will sound familiar because they have helped so many others before you and have often been quoted, alluded to in great literature and sometimes even made into song. We pray that in your life now, they may point the way to a better path ahead.

Where do you go when life hurts? Where do you turn when you need a word of hope?

Within these pages you'll find selected passages from the Bible, carefully chosen for all those who seek comfort and help in painful times. Our prayer is that you'd find strength and inspiration, knowing that God is always ready to help in times of trouble.

Your word is a lamp to guide me
and a light for my path.

Psalm 119.105

The Shepherd Psalm

Psalm 23*

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.
He maketh me to lie down in green pastures:
he leadeth me beside the still waters. He
restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the
paths of righteousness for his name's sake.
Yea, though I walk through the valley of
the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for
thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they
comfort me.

Thou preparest a table before me in the
presence of mine enemies: thou anointest
my head with oil; my cup runneth over.
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me
all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the
house of the Lord for ever.



Wait on the Lord

Psalm 27

The Lord is my light and my salvation; I will fear no one. The Lord protects me from all danger; I will never be afraid.

When evil people attack me and try to kill me, they stumble and fall. Even if a whole army surrounds me, I will not be afraid; even if enemies attack me, I will still trust God.

I have asked the Lord for one thing; one thing only do I want: to live in the Lord's house all my life, to marvel there at his goodness, and to ask for his guidance. In times of trouble he will shelter me; he will keep me safe in his Temple and make me secure on a high rock. So I will triumph over my enemies around me. With shouts of joy I will offer sacrifices in his Temple; I will sing, I will praise the Lord. Hear me, Lord, when I call to you! Be merciful

and answer me! When you said, "Come worship me," I answered, "I will come, Lord." Don't hide yourself from me!

Don't be angry with me; don't turn your servant away. You have been my help; don't leave me, don't abandon me, O God, my savior. My father and mother may abandon me, but the Lord will take care of me.

Teach me, Lord, what you want me to do, and lead me along a safe path, because I have many enemies. Don't abandon me to my enemies, who attack me with lies and threats.

I know that I will live to see the Lord's goodness in this present life. Trust in the Lord. Have faith, do not despair. Trust in the Lord.

God Our Protector

Psalm 91:1-4

Whoever goes to the Lord for safety, whoever remains under the protection of the Almighty, can say to him, “You are my defender and protector. You are my God; in you I trust.” He will keep you safe from all hidden dangers and from all deadly diseases. He will cover you with his wings; you will be safe in his care; his faithfulness will protect and defend you.



The Source of Help

Psalm 121

I look to the mountains; where will my help come from?
My help will come from the Lord, who made heaven
and earth.

He will not let you fall; your protector is always awake.

The protector of Israel never dozes or sleeps. The Lord
will guard you; he is by your side to protect you. The sun
will not hurt you during the day, nor the moon during
the night.

The Lord will protect you from all danger; he will keep
you safe. He will protect you as you come and go now
and forever.



Our Refuge and Strength

Psalm 46

God is our shelter and strength, always ready to help in times of trouble. So we will not be afraid, even if the earth is shaken and mountains fall into the ocean depths; even if the seas roar and rage, and the hills are shaken by the violence.

There is a river that brings joy to the city of God, to the sacred house of the Most High. God is in that city, and it will never be destroyed; at early dawn he will come to its aid. Nations are terrified, kingdoms are shaken; God thunders, and the earth dissolves. The Lord Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge.

Come and see what the Lord has done. See what amazing things he has done on earth. He stops wars all over the world; he breaks bows, destroys spears, and sets shields on fire. “Stop fighting,” he says, “and know that I am God, supreme among the nations, supreme over the world.”

The Lord Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge.



Trust

Psalm 125.1-2

Those who trust in the Lord are like Mount Zion, which can never be shaken, never be moved. As the mountains surround Jerusalem, so the Lord surrounds his people, now and forever.

Bless the Lord, O My Soul

Psalm 103.1-5

Praise the Lord, my soul! All my being, praise his holy name! Praise the Lord, my soul, and do not forget how kind he is. He forgives all my sins and heals all my diseases. He keeps me from the grave and blesses me with love and mercy. He fills my life with good things, so that I stay young and strong like an eagle.

Trust in the Lord

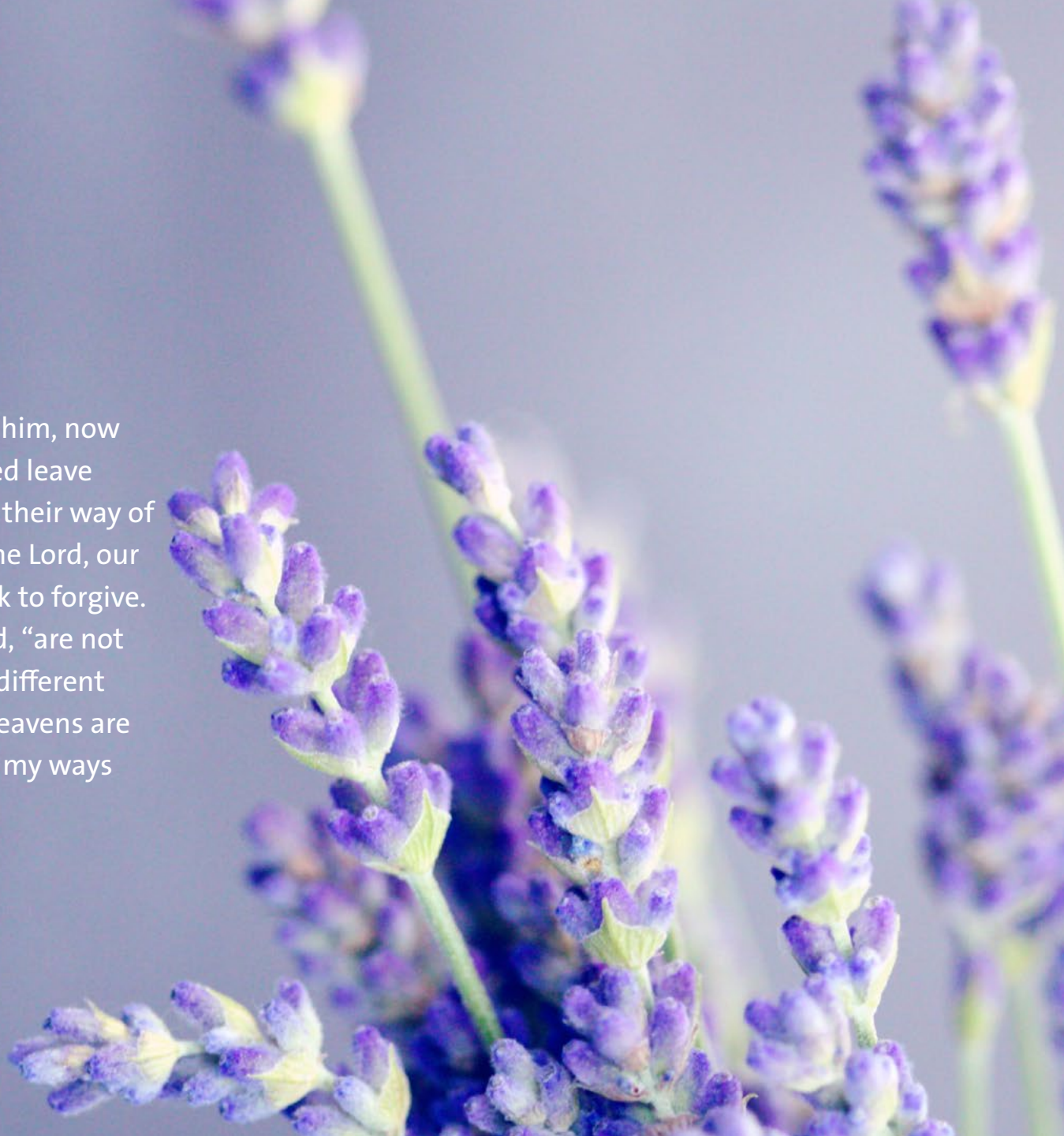
Proverbs 3.5-6

Trust in the Lord with all your heart. Never rely on what you think you know. Remember the Lord in everything you do, and he will show you the right way.

God is Merciful

Isaiah 55.6-9

Turn to the Lord and pray to him, now that he is near. Let the wicked leave their way of life and change their way of thinking. Let them turn to the Lord, our God; he is merciful and quick to forgive. “My thoughts,” says the Lord, “are not like yours, and my ways are different from yours. As high as the heavens are above the earth, so high are my ways and thoughts above yours.





Comfort My People

Isaiah 40.1-8, 28-31

“Comfort my people,” says our God. “Comfort them! Encourage the people of Jerusalem. Tell them they have suffered long enough and their sins are now forgiven. I have punished them in full for all their sins.”

A voice cries out, “Prepare in the wilderness a road for the Lord! Clear the way in the desert for our God! Fill every valley; level every mountain. The hills will become a plain, and the rough country will be made smooth. Then the glory of the

Lord will be revealed, and all people will see it. The Lord himself has promised this.”

A voice cries out, “Proclaim a message!” “What message shall I proclaim?” I ask. “Proclaim that all human beings are like grass; they last no longer than wild flowers. Grass withers and flowers fade when the Lord sends the wind blowing over them. People are no more enduring than grass. Yes, grass withers and flowers fade, but the word of our God

endures forever.” Don’t you know? Haven’t you heard? The Lord is the everlasting God; he created all the world. He never grows tired or weary. No one understands his thoughts. He strengthens those who are weak and tired. Even those who are young grow weak; young people can fall exhausted. But those who trust in the Lord for help will find their strength renewed. They will rise on wings like eagles; they will run and not get weary; they will walk and not grow weak.

Come to Me

Matthew 11.28-30

Jesus said: “Come to me, all of you who are tired from carrying heavy loads, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke and put it on you, and learn from me, because I am gentle and humble in spirit; and you will find rest. For the yoke I will give you is easy, and the load I will put on you is light.”

Jesus Heals

Matthew 15.30-31

Large crowds came to him, bringing with them the lame, the blind, the crippled, the dumb, and many other sick people, whom they placed at Jesus’ feet; and he healed them. The people were amazed as they saw the dumb speaking, the crippled made whole, the lame walking, and the blind seeing; and they praised the God of Israel.

Don’t Be Afraid

Matthew 10.29-31

“For only a penny you can buy two sparrows, yet not one sparrow falls to the ground without your Father’s consent. As for you, even the hairs of your head have all been counted. So do not be afraid; you are worth much more than many sparrows!”

Don't Worry

Matthew 6.25-34

This is why I [Jesus] tell you: do not be worried about the food and drink you need in order to stay alive, or about clothes for your body. After all, isn't life worth more than food? And isn't the body worth more than clothes? Look at the birds: they do not plant seeds, gather a harvest and put it in barns; yet your Father in heaven takes care of them! Aren't you worth much more than birds? Can any of you live a bit longer by worrying about it?

And why worry about clothes? Look how the wild flowers grow: they do not work or make clothes for themselves. But I tell you that not even King Solomon with all his wealth had clothes as beautiful as one of these flowers. It is God who clothes the wild grass—grass that is here today and gone tomorrow, burned up in the oven. Won't he be all the more sure to clothe you? What little faith you have!

So do not start worrying: "Where will my food come from? or my drink? or my clothes?" (These are the things the pagans are always concerned about.) Your Father in heaven knows that you need all these things. Instead, be concerned above everything else with the Kingdom of God and with what he requires of you, and he will provide you with all these other things. So do not worry about tomorrow; it will have enough worries of its own. There is no need to add to the troubles each day brings.



Perfect Peace

Isaiah 26.3-4

You, Lord, give perfect peace to those who keep their purpose firm and put their trust in you. Trust in the Lord forever; he will always protect us.

Ask

Matthew 7.7-8

Jesus said: “Ask, and you will receive; seek, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks will receive, and anyone who seeks will find, and the door will be opened to those who knock.”

Out of the Depths

Psalm 130

From the depths of my despair I call to you, Lord. Hear my cry, O Lord; listen to my call for help! If you kept a record of our sins, who could escape being condemned? But you forgive us, so that we should stand in awe of you.

I wait eagerly for the Lord’s help, and in his word I trust. I wait for the Lord more eagerly than sentries wait for the dawn—than sentries wait for the dawn.

Israel, trust in the Lord, because his love is constant and he is always willing to save. He will save his people Israel from all their sins.



You Would Be There

Psalm 139.7-12

Where could I go to escape from you? Where could I get away from your presence? If I went up to heaven, you would be there; if I lay down in the world of the dead, you would be there. If I flew away beyond the east or lived in the farthest place in the west, you would be there to lead me, you would be there to help me. I could ask the darkness to hide me or the light around me to turn into night, but even darkness is not dark for you, and the night is as bright as the day. Darkness and light are the same to you.

I Will Be with You

Isaiah 43.1-3

Israel, the Lord who created you says, “Do not be afraid—I will save you. I have called you by name—you are mine. When you pass through deep waters, I will be with you; your troubles will not overwhelm you. When you pass through fire, you will not be burned; the hard trials that come will not hurt you. For I am the Lord your God, the holy God of Israel, who saves you.

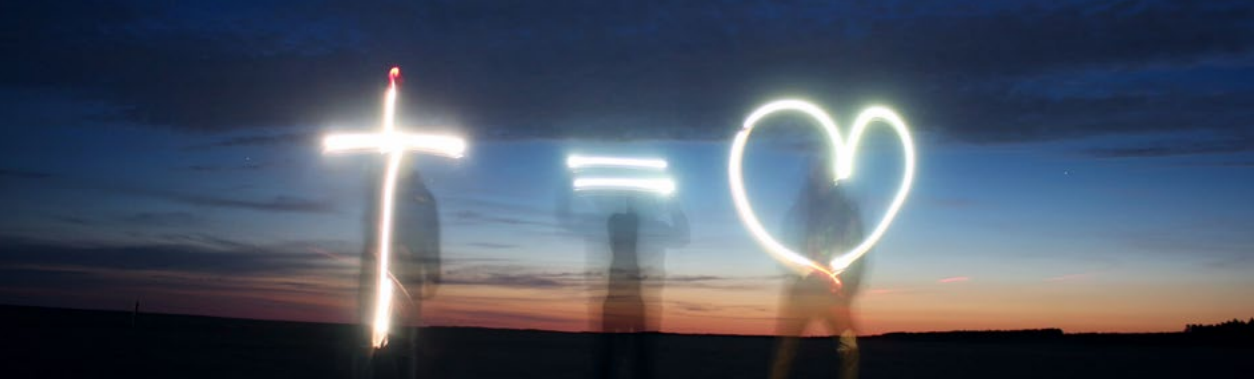
True Happiness

Matthew 5.3-10

Happy are those who know they are spiritually poor; the Kingdom of heaven belongs to them! Happy are those who mourn; God will comfort them! Happy are those who are humble; they will receive what God has promised! Happy are those whose greatest desire is to do what God requires; God will satisfy them

fully! Happy are those who are merciful to others; God will be merciful to them! Happy are the pure in heart; they will see God! Happy are those who work for peace; God will call them his children! Happy are those who are persecuted because they do what God requires; the Kingdom of heaven belongs to them!





Love

1 Corinthians 13

I may be able to speak the languages of human beings and even of angels, but if I have no love, my speech is no more than a noisy gong or a clanging bell. I may have the gift of inspired preaching; I may have all knowledge and understand all secrets; I may have all the faith needed to move mountains—but if I have no love, I am nothing. I may give away everything I have, and even give up my body to be burned—but if I have no love, this does me no good.

Love is patient and kind; it is not jealous or conceited or proud; love is not ill-mannered or selfish or irritable; love does not keep a record of wrongs; love is not happy with evil, but is happy with the truth. Love never gives up; and its faith, hope, and patience never fail.

Love is eternal. There are inspired messages, but they are temporary; there are gifts of speaking in strange tongues, but they will cease; there is knowledge, but it will pass. For our gifts of knowledge and of inspired messages are only

partial; but when what is perfect comes, then what is partial will disappear. When I was a child, my speech, feelings, and thinking were all those of a child; now that I am an adult, I have no more use for childish ways. What we see now is like a dim image in a mirror; then we shall see face-to-face. What I know now is only partial; then it will be complete—as complete as God's knowledge of me.

Meanwhile these three remain: faith, hope, and love; and the greatest of these is love.

Love One Another

John 15.12-17

My commandment is this: love one another, just as I love you. The greatest love you can have for your friends is to give your life for them. And you are my friends if you do what I command you. I do not call you servants any longer, because servants do not know what their master is doing. Instead, I call you friends, because I have told you everything I heard from my Father. You did not choose me; I chose you and appointed you to go and bear much fruit, the kind of fruit that endures. And so the Father will give you whatever you ask of him in my name. This, then, is what I command you: love one another.

God is Love

1 John 4.7-12

Dear friends, let us love one another, because love comes from God. Whoever loves is a child of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love. And God showed his love for us by sending his only Son into the world, so that we might have life through him. This is what love is: it is not that we have loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the means by which our sins are forgiven.

Dear friends, if this is how God loved us, then we should love one another. No one has ever seen God, but if we love one another, God lives in union with us, and his love is made perfect in us.

The Power of Faith

Matthew 8:5-8, 13

When Jesus entered Capernaum, a Roman officer met him and begged for help: “Sir, my servant is sick in bed at home, unable to move and suffering terribly.”

“I will go and make him well,” Jesus said. “Oh no, sir,” answered the officer. “I do not deserve to have you come into my house. Just give the order, and my servant will get well.

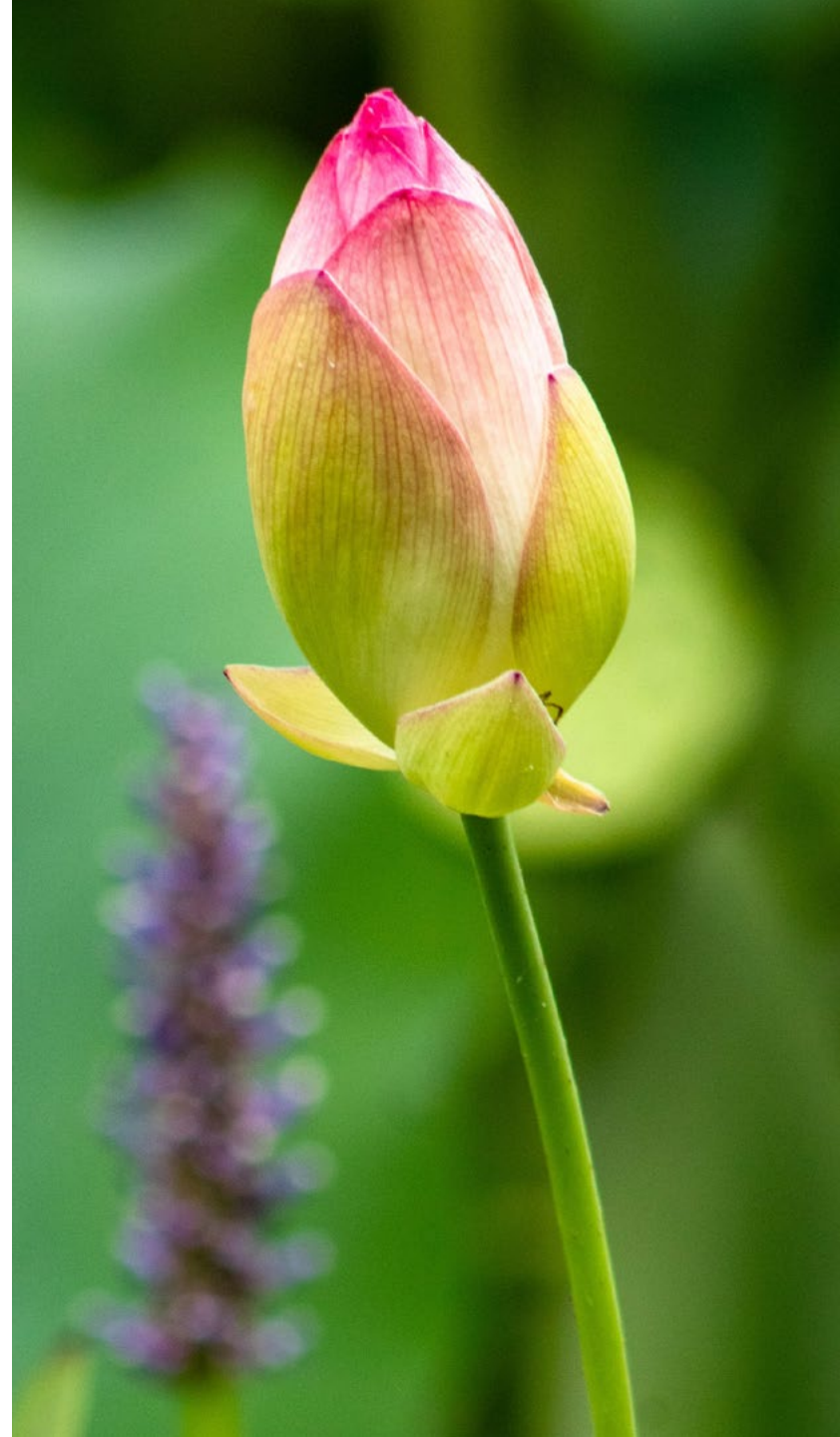
Then Jesus said to the officer, “Go home, and what you believe will be done for you.”

Be Still!

Mark 4:37-39

Suddenly a strong wind blew up, and the waves began to spill over into the boat, so that it was about to fill with water. Jesus was in the back of the boat, sleeping with his head on a pillow. The disciples woke him up and said, “Teacher, don’t you care that we are about to die?”

Jesus stood up and commanded the wind, “Be quiet!” and he said to the waves, “Be still!” The wind died down, and there was a great calm.



Complete Victory

Romans 8.31-39

In view of all this, what can we say? If God is for us, who can be against us? Certainly not God, who did not even keep back his own Son, but offered him for us all! He gave us his Son—will he not also freely give us all things? Who will accuse God’s chosen people? God himself declares them not guilty! Who, then, will condemn them? Not Christ Jesus, who died, or rather, who was raised to life and is at the right

side of God, pleading with him for us! Who, then, can separate us from the love of Christ? Can trouble do it, or hardship or persecution or hunger or poverty or danger or death? As the scripture says, “For your sake we are in danger of death at all times; we are treated like sheep that are going to be slaughtered.”

No, in all these things we have complete victory through him

who loved us! For I am certain that nothing can separate us from his love: neither death nor life, neither angels nor other heavenly rulers or powers, neither the present nor the future, neither the world above nor the world below—there is nothing in all creation that will ever be able to separate us from the love of God which is ours through Christ Jesus our Lord.



Patience and Encouragement

Romans 15.4-6

Everything written in the Scriptures was written to teach us, in order that we might have hope through the patience and encouragement which the Scriptures give us. And may God, the source of patience and encouragement, enable you to have the same point of view among yourselves by following the example of Christ Jesus, so that all of you together may praise with one voice the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

What Cannot Be Seen

2 Corinthians 4.16-18

For this reason we never become discouraged. Even though our physical being is gradually decaying, yet our spiritual being is renewed day after day. And this small and temporary trouble we suffer will bring us a tremendous and eternal glory, much greater than the trouble. For we fix our attention, not on things that are seen, but on things that are unseen. What can be seen lasts only for a time, but what cannot be seen lasts forever.

The Good Shepherd

John 10.11-16

Jesus said: “I am the good shepherd, who is willing to die for the sheep. When the hired man, who is not a shepherd and does not own the sheep, sees a wolf coming, he leaves the sheep and runs away; so the wolf snatches the sheep and

scatters them. The hired man runs away because he is only a hired man and does not care about the sheep. I am the good shepherd. As the Father knows me and I know the Father, in the same way I know my sheep and they know me. And

I am willing to die for them. There are other sheep which belong to me that are not in this sheep pen. I must bring them, too; they will listen to my voice, and they will become one flock with one shepherd.”





Follow Me

Matthew 16.24-26

Then Jesus said to his disciples, “If any of you want to come with me, you must forget yourself, carry your cross, and follow me. For if you want to save your own life, you will lose it; but if you lose your life for my sake, you will find it. Will you gain anything if you win the whole world but lose your life? Of course not! There is nothing you can give to regain your life.”

Christ’s Ministry

Luke 4.18-22a

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has chosen me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free the oppressed and announce that the time has come when the Lord will save his people.”

Jesus rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. All the people in the synagogue had their eyes fixed on him, as he said to them, “This passage of scripture has come true today, as you heard it being read.” They were all well impressed with him and marveled at the eloquent words that he spoke.

Death is Destroyed

1 Corinthians 15:54-58

So when this takes place, and the mortal has been changed into the immortal, then the scripture will come true: “Death is destroyed; victory is complete!” “Where, Death, is your victory? Where, Death, is your power to hurt?”

Death gets its power to hurt from sin, and sin gets its power from the Law. But thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!

So then, my dear friends, stand firm and steady. Keep busy always in your work for the Lord, since you know that nothing you do in the Lord’s service is ever useless.

Help in Our Troubles

2 Corinthians 1:3-5

Let us give thanks to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the merciful Father, the God from whom all help comes! He helps us in all our troubles, so that we are able to help others who have all kinds of troubles, using the same help that we ourselves have received from God. Just as we have a share in Christ’s many sufferings, so also through Christ we share in God’s great help.

Peace with God

Romans 5:1-5

Now that we have been put right with God through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. He has brought us by faith into this experience of God's grace, in which we now live. And so we boast of the hope we have of sharing God's glory! We also boast of our troubles, because we know that trouble produces endurance, endurance brings God's approval, and his approval creates hope. This hope does not disappoint us, for God has poured out his love into our hearts by means of the Holy Spirit, who is God's gift to us.



The Word of the Lord

1 Peter 1.23-25

For through the living and eternal word of God you have been born again as the children of a parent who is immortal, not mortal. As the scripture says, “All human beings are like grass, and all their glory is like wild flowers. The grass withers, and the flowers fall, but the word of the Lord remains forever.”

Eternal Life

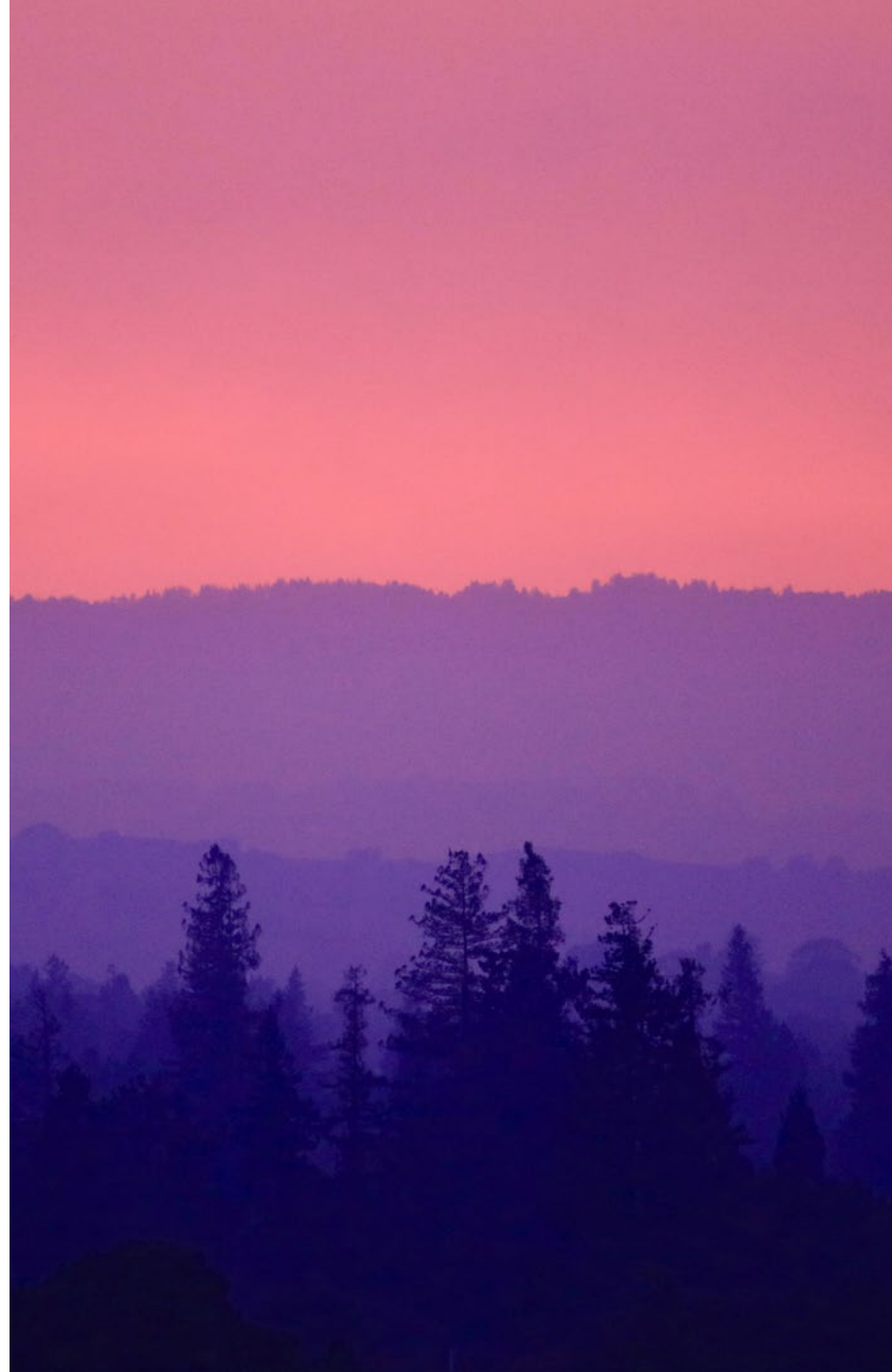
John 17.3

Eternal life means to know you, the only true God, and to know Jesus Christ, whom you sent.

Grace in Weakness

2 Corinthians 12.9a

The Lord says: “My grace is all you need, for my power is greatest when you are weak.”



God Gives Us Peace

Philippians 4.4-9

May you always be joyful in your union with the Lord. I say it again: rejoice! Show a gentle attitude toward everyone. The Lord is coming soon. Don't worry about anything, but in all your prayers ask God for what you need, always asking him with a thankful heart. And God's peace, which is far beyond human understanding, will keep your hearts and minds safe in union with Christ Jesus.

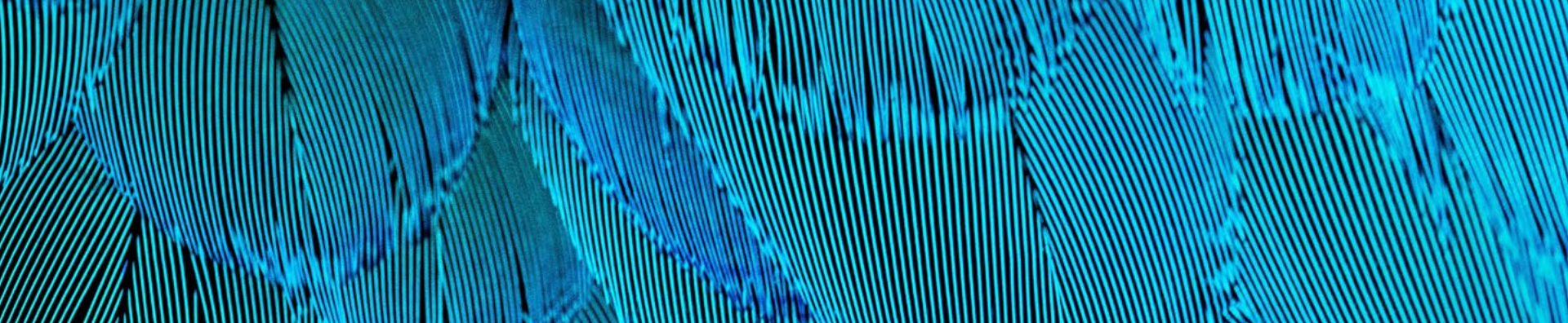
In conclusion, my friends, fill your minds with those things that are good and that deserve praise: things that are true, noble, right, pure, lovely, and honorable. Put into practice what you learned and received from me, both from my words and from my actions. And the God who gives us peace will be with you.

Know His Love

Ephesians 3.14-21

For this reason I fall on my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth receives its true name. I ask God from the wealth of his glory to give you power through his Spirit to be strong in your inner selves, and I pray that Christ will make his home in your hearts through faith. I pray that you may have your roots and foundation in love, so that you, together with all God's people, may have the power to understand how broad and long, how high and deep, is Christ's love. Yes, may you come to know his love—although it can never be fully known—and so be completely filled with the very nature of God.

To him who by means of his power working in us is able to do so much more than we can ever ask for, or even think of: to God be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus for all time, forever and ever! Amen.



Gratitude

Luke 17.12-19

Jesus was going into a village when he was met by ten men suffering from a dreaded skin disease. They stood at a distance and shouted, “Jesus! Master! Have pity on us!” Jesus saw them and said to them, “Go and let the priests examine you.”

On the way they were made clean. When one of them saw that he was healed, he came back, praising God in a loud voice. He threw himself to the ground at Jesus’ feet and thanked him. The man was a Samaritan. Jesus spoke up, “There were ten who were healed; where are the other nine? Why is this foreigner the only one who came back to give thanks to God?” And Jesus said to him, “Get up and go; your faith has made you well.”

The Lost Sheep

Luke 15.3-7

Jesus told them this parable: “Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them—what do you do? You leave the other ninety-nine sheep in the pasture and go looking for the one that got lost until you find it. When you find it, you are so happy that you put it on your shoulders and carry it back home. Then you call your friends and neighbors together and say to them, ‘I am so happy I found my lost sheep. Let us celebrate!’ In the same way, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine respectable people who do not need to repent.”

Words of Comfort

John 14.1-7

“Do not be worried and upset,” Jesus told them. “Believe in God and believe also in me. There are many rooms in my Father’s house, and I am going to prepare a place for you. I would not tell you this if it were not so. And after I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to myself, so that you will be where I am. You know the way that leads to the place where I am going.”

Thomas said to him, “Lord, we do not know where you are going; so how can we know the way to get there?”

Jesus answered him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life; no one goes to the Father except by me. Now that you have known me,” he said to them, “you will know my Father also, and from now on you do know him and you have seen him.”

Good News

John 3.16-17

For God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not die but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to be its judge, but to be its savior.





Inspired by God

2 Timothy 3.14-17

But as for you, continue in the truths that you were taught and firmly believe. You know who your teachers were, and you remember that ever since you were a child, you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching the truth, rebuking error, correcting faults, and giving instruction for right living, so that the person who serves God may be fully qualified and equipped to do every kind of good deed.

The God of Peace

Hebrews 13.20-21

God has raised from death our Lord Jesus, who is the Great Shepherd of the sheep as the result of his blood, by which the eternal covenant is sealed. May the God of peace provide you with every good thing you need in order to do his will, and may he, through Jesus Christ, do in us what pleases him. And to Christ be the glory forever and ever! Amen.

The Water of Life

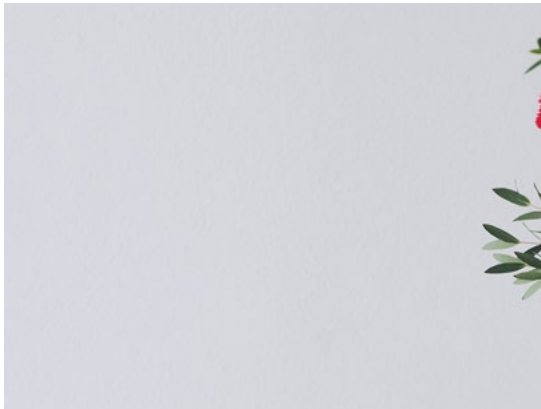
John 4.13-14

Jesus answered, “Those who drink this water will get thirsty again, but those who drink the water that I will give them will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give them will become in them a spring which will provide them with life-giving water and give them eternal life.”

Let the Children Come to Me

Luke 18.15-17

Some people brought their babies to Jesus for him to place his hands on them. The disciples saw them and scolded them for doing so, but Jesus called the children to him and said, “Let the children come to me and do not stop them, because the Kingdom of God belongs to such as these. Remember this! Whoever does not receive the Kingdom of God like a child will never enter it.”





The Lord's Prayer

Matthew 6.9-13*

After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.



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