



UPSIDE DOWN

“This is my body, which is broken for you”
1 Corinthians 11:24

A Passion Devotional
Bellevue Church

Passion Devotional Contents

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Introduction

Welcome.

Easter is not a “rabbit trail” that takes you to the great chocolate bunny in the sky; neither is it the soft center of a marshmallow egg.

If there is a right trail, then it is the “Via Dolorosa” that takes you to the Cross. And sometimes we may want a “marshmallow cross” to soften the blow; but the Cross is cruel-not-soft and Jesus is at its center!

There are 30 “stations” on this devotional trail, and the Cross is not the full-stop; It is the trail to a resurrected life for you and I that will enjoy in the final resurrections, where we meet Him in the sky, as the wedding bells ring, and we are with the One we love forever! (1Thes. 5:17)

I hope that as you follow in His footsteps (1 Peter 2:21) through this journey, that your passion will be mingled with His Passion, and that the experience of the Truth will be as life-changing for you as Christ intends it to be...

And I hope that He comes while you're reading! (Rev. 22:20)

Day One

Scripture

Now before the Feast of the Passover, Jesus knowing that His hour had come that He would depart out of this world to the Father, having LOVED His own who were in the world, He LOVED them to the end. John 13:1

The Love

Devotional

John 3:16 tells us that, "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life." As the Son "loved His own who were in the world, (and) loved them to the end," He said, "greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends." (John 15:13)

What kind of love is this? Kind love indeed! That Christ should consummate friendship with sinners by dying on a cruel cross! Oh, friend, does your heart not flutter like David's when he says in Psalm 139:6, "Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; It is too high, I cannot attain to it."

What mysterious and alien love is this? That yet "God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet just sinners, Christ died for us." (Rom 5:8) If true love was ever proven, it was proven in God going to the cross for you in the person of Jesus!

If the new commandment is to love one another, are we loving like Jesus? The answer is simple. It is found in 1 John 3:16: "We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren."

Prayer

Father, thanks so much for demonstrating your love in the greatest way possible. Please help me to love like you love, Lord, and help me respond with sacrifice to your sacrifice. I ask this in the name of Love.

Day Two

Scripture

Mary then took a pound of very costly perfume of pure nard, and ANOINTED the feet of Jesus and wiped His feet with her hair, and the house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume. John 12:3 "For when she poured this perfume on My body, she did it to prepare Me for burial. Truly I say to you, wherever this gospel is preached in the whole world, what this woman has done will also be spoken of in memory of her"
Matt 26: 12-13

The Anointing

Devotional

This is a fitting act of devotion to our sacrificed Savior- to pour out our lives to Him in humility as something "very costly." Jesus said that we love much when we've been forgiven much (Luke 7:47) The fragrance of a life completely surrendered to God is the reflex of authentic gratitude. At one time, "Mary, was seated at the Lord's feet, listening to His word. But Martha was distracted with all her preparations; but the Lord said to her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and bothered about so many things; but only one thing is necessary, for Mary has chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her." (Luke 10:39-42) Our lives need to "smell" of this priority-the "one thing that is necessary"-endearing devotion to Christ in prayer. Being distracted with preparations, worried and hurried, is an indication of restless competitions, not prayerful gratitude.

When the true Gospel is preached, it releases this sacrificial aroma in God's people.

This anointing was for burial, and "You have an anointing from the Holy One (1 John 2:20) Is your anointing also for burial? The "fragrance" of Christians who have had their flesh put through the fire, makes them the incense bearers of the true Gospel.

Prayer

My Father, please forgive me for the frantic pace. I smell like burning rubber! I want the Gospel to produce the aroma of sacrificial devotion to You. Please work in me so that the "one thing necessary" becomes the priority of my life. Thank you, Lord.

Day Three

Scripture

Then came the first day of Unleavened Bread on which the Passover Lamb had to be sacrificed... And He said to them, "I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer" Luke 22:7, 15

The Passover Lamb

Devotional

The significance of the interplay of this historic Jewish Feast with the death of Jesus Christ cannot be overstated. The Israelites were instructed to slaughter a spotless lamb, sprinkle its blood on the doorposts of their homes, and eat its roasted flesh. In so doing, the angel of death would pass over their homes, and they would be safe, while every firstborn son in Egypt died. God's action that first Passover night was the final stroke that shattered the chains of slavery, and ushered in the annual commemoration of what is known as the "Festival of Freedom."

In John 1:29, John the baptizer described Jesus as, "the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world." 1 Corinthians 5:7 tells us that "Christ our Passover also has been sacrificed, and Revelation 13:8 describes Jesus as the "Lamb who has been slain."

Our sacrificed Savior is the once-for-all fulfillment of the Passover Feast! As the Passover Lamb, Christ has freed us from the slavery of sin! The Last Supper is our "Festival of Freedom"! When we eat the bread of His broken body, and when we drink the wine of His sprinkled blood, let's lift up high the cup of our salvation as a toast to our liberating Lamb!

Prayer

Lord Jesus, thank you that I am saved from death because of your blood; thank you for not only taking away my sin, but for destroying sin's enslaving power! When I commune with you in our Love Feast, I want to remember your "earnest desire" to become the Slain Savior.

Day Four

Scripture

While they were eating, Jesus took some bread, and after a blessing, He broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, "Take, eat; this is My body (Matthew 26:26) [which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me.] (1 Cor 11:24) And in the same way He took the cup after they had eaten, saying, "This cup which is poured out for you is the New Covenant in My blood (Luke 22:20) [which is poured out for many for forgiveness of sins."] (Matt 26:28)

The Covenant

Devotional

When we think the "covenant," we think of an agreement or contract between two parties, but that is not the Biblical meaning of this word. In Scripture it refers to a unilateral and irrevocable WILL from a testator, requiring no human cooperation, springing singularly from the volition of God himself, to designate his heirs, and invest them with the rights of inheritance as a free gift!

The enforcing of any Will requires the confirmed death of the testator ("But coming to Jesus, when they saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs." John 19:33). The NIV accurately captures "covenant" in Hebrews 9:16-18 "In the case of a WILL, it is necessary to prove the death of the one who made it, because a WILL is in force only when somebody has died; it never takes effect while the one who made it is living. This is why even the first (covenant) was not put into effect without blood."

For this reason, we are told in 1 Corinthians 11:26, "As often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes." The Last Will of God is put into effect by the death of His Son and the Bible documents your unmerited legal inheritance!

Prayer

Thank you Jesus for making all your promises "Yes" and "Amen" to me through your death. Teach my heart to say "Yes" and "Amen" to all that you ask, and please let my life exhibit the reality of my inheritance that you have secured at such great cost.

Day Five

Scripture

Judas said, "What are you willing to give me to BETRAY Him to you?" And they weighed out thirty pieces of silver to him. From then on he began looking for a good opportunity to betray Jesus.. And He answered, "He who dipped his hand with me in the bowl is the one who will betray Me...And Judas, who was betraying Him, said, "Surely it is not I, Rabbi?" Jesus said to him, "you have said it yourself." Matthew 26:15-16, 23

The Betrayal

Devotional

Judas betrayed Jesus for 30 pieces of silver. And today Jesus is still being betrayed for money. One would almost think that there is no other "gospel" than the "prosperity gospel." Yet the Bible strongly cautions us about the "deceitfulness of riches" (Mark 4:19); Timothy is warned to flee the "love of money as the root of all evil" (1 Tim 6:10); Jesus warns that money is a master, a god, an object of worship, that we can't serve Him and money, and that loyalty to one betrays the other (Matt 6:24). And Judas loved money. He stole from the treasury (John 12:6), like non-givers do today (Mal 3:8 and Acts 5:1-11), and that became the root of his betrayal. Scripture warns us that in these closing days, "men will be lovers of money, having a form of godliness, although they have denied its power." We are "to avoid such men as these!" (2 Tim 3:5)

Greed is idolatry (Col 3:5) Money is a substitute god, and Eccl. 10:19 tells us that "money is the answer to everything"! Hence Judas could betray Jesus-Christ wasn't his answer, and therefore Christ wasn't his God. Are you content with Christ alone?

Prayer

Father, please extract "Lord Lotto" from my heart, and put a loyal spirit within me. Please save me from betraying you to the "highest bidder." Help me to be content with what I have, so that I can be generous to those who do not have. Amen.

Day Six

Scripture

But Peter said to Him, "Even though all may fall away because of You, I will never fall away" Jesus said to him, "Truly I say to you that this very night, before a rooster crows, you will DENY Me three times." Peter said to Him "Even if I have to die with You, I will not deny You" All the disciples said the same thing too. Matt 26:33-35

The Denial

Devotional

...And I've said the same thing-"I will never fall away", and "I will not deny You." But, when the crosses of hardship, failure, pain and shortage walk into our world, we find that "the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak," and we ask things like, "God, where are you?" But that's not the right question, is it? The real question is, "Where are YOU?" It's the same question God asked Adam in the garden when he was hiding! God's not the one "missing in action"-Adam was, Peter was, and so are we!

In the face of our crosses in life, it is not Christ that we must deny-it is ourselves! Jesus said, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must DENY HIMSELF, and take up his CROSS and follow Me" (Matthew 16:24). The cross gives us the power to deny ourselves, so that we have the power to witness for Jesus! Paul said, "I am not ashamed of the gospel because it is the power of God for salvation" (Rom 1:16). Jesus said in Luke 9:26, "Whoever is ashamed of Me and My words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him," The cross gives us the power to deny ourselves, so that we will not deny Him, and be denied by Him! (Matthew 10:33)

Prayer

Lord God, please help me to unashamedly identify with your Cross, so that my cowardice is not confirmed by the "rooster crows" of lost souls that have slipped through the cracks of my weak witness! (Matthew 26:75)

Day Seven

Scripture

Then Jesus came with them to a place called GETHSEMANE...Then He said to them, "My soul is deeply grieved, to the point of death; remain here and keep watch with Me" Matt 26-36, 38 And being in agony He was praying very fervently; and His sweat became like drops of blood, falling down upon the ground.

Gethsemane

Devotional

What Christ experienced here was intense, mortifying grief. A score needed to be settled, and He had come for that very purpose: "Now My soul has become troubled; and what shall I say, "Father, save Me from this hour?" But for this purpose I came to this hour" (John 12:27). That score was the tsunami of humanity's sin against our Holy Creator that demanded the inevitable wrath of Justice! So, "God made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf" (2 Corinthians 5:21), and Jesus put Himself in harm's way for you and I!

We have no idea what that must have felt like for Him, simply because we are not pure. But Purity was about to be defiled, and executed in judgement! Sweating blood? No surprise! Hebrews 5:7 says, "He offered up prayers and supplications with loud crying and tears to the One able to save Him from death, and He was heard because of his piety." Isaiah 53:11 says, "As a result of the anguish of His soul, He will see it and be satisfied."

Gethsemane is a pattern-principle for the believer- a will-definer. The place(s) in our walk where we resign to God's will, and pray, "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; yet not as I will, but as you will." (Matthew 26:39) We don't short-circuit suffering in this life-we fellowship with it! (Phil 3:10)

Prayer

Father, "Although Jesus was a Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered." (Hebrews 5:8) Please translate my suffering into obedience.

Day Eight

Scripture

Judas then, having received the Roman cohort and officers from the chief priests and the Pharisees, came there with lanterns and torches and weapons. (John 18:3)... and he approached Jesus to kiss Him. But Jesus said to him, "Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a KISS?"
Luke 22:47-48

The Kiss

Devotional

Psalm 55 captures the "kiss" prophetically: "For it is not an enemy who reproaches me, then I could bear it; nor is it one who hates me who has exalted himself against me. But it is you... my companion and my familiar friend; "we who had sweet fellowship together." It is a stinging thing to be kissed with deception by a brother, where motives are not pure, where "weapons" rattle in the cohort of the soul, where ambition is concealed, and friendship is not binding. Sincerity and transparency should be the hallmarks of the believer. Proverbs 27:5 says, "Better is open rebuke than love that is concealed. Faithful are the wounds of a friend, but deceitful are the kisses of an enemy."

There is an "up-kiss" and a "down-kiss." In Absalom's conspiracy, "When a man came near to prostrate himself before Absalom, he would put out his hand and take hold of him and kiss him" (2 Samuel 15:5). Absalom and Judas are "up-kissers"- their eyes are open when they kiss, looking beyond you to the next opportunity! A "down-kisser" is like the woman "standing behind Jesus at His feet, weeping, who began to wet His feet with her tears, and kept wiping them with her hair, and kissing His feet anointing them with the perfume". (Luke 7:38) That's a down-kisser! That's sincerity! That's the mark of a forgiven soul! That's a Holy kiss! (Romans 16:16; et al)

Prayer

Father, please purge my heart of deceit. Impregnate my soul with sincerity. Take away the masks, so that my lips can land a holy kiss!

Day Nine

Scripture

And the high priest said to Him, "I adjure You by the living God, that You tell us whether You are the Christ, the SON OF GOD." Matt. 26:63 And Jesus said, "I AM; and you shall see THE SON OF MAN SITTING AT THE RIGHT HAND OF POWER, and COMING WITH THE CLOUDS OF HEAVEN.... Then the high priest tore his robes and said, "He has blasphemed! What further need do we have of witnesses? Behold, you have now heard the blasphemy; what do you think?" They answered, "He deserves death" Mark 14:62-64. The Jews answered him "We have a law, and by the law He ought to die because He made Himself out to be the SON OF GOD" John 19:7

Son of God

Devotional

Christ's response to the 'Son of God' question is the definitive, unequivocal declaration of Deity- "I AM"- "EGO EIMI" (Gr)- The self-existent, eternal One! The same name that commissioned Moses in Exodus 3:14! For the Council, this was blasphemy, as confirmed by John 5:18: "The Jews were seeking all the more to kill Him, because He...was calling God His own Father, making Himself equal with God" and in John 10:33 the Jews answered Him, "For a good work we do not stone You, but for blasphemy; and because You, being a man, make Yourself out to be God."

"Now the centurion, and those who were keeping guard over Jesus, when they saw...they said, "Truly this was the SON OF GOD!" (Matt 27:54). These, who flogged and mocked and crowned and pierced and plucked and drove nails into His hands and feet, were able to see the Truth of the Great I AM.

For the blind who led the blind, they were looking into the mud and blood crusted face of a carpenter's boy. But for you and I, we look into the face of the One "who was declared the SON OF GOD with power by the resurrection from the dead...Jesus Christ our Lord!" (Romans 1:4)

Prayer

Father, I believe in "Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, very God of very God."

Day Ten

Scripture

Therefore Pilate said to Him, "So You are a king?" Jesus answered, "You say correctly that I am a king. For this I have been born, and for this I have come into the world, to testify to the TRUTH. Everyone who is of the TRUTH hears My voice". Pilate said to Him, "WHAT IS TRUTH?" And when he had said this, he went out again to the Jews and said to them, "I find no guilt in Him". John 18:37, 38

The Truth

Devotional

"What is truth?" Can anyone truthfully answer that? Jesus can. Despite what the soft-sell pundits of tolerance in post-modernity may tell you, truth is not relative- it is ABSOLUTE! For those not knowing which way is up, Jesus said, I AM the Way, and the Truth, and the Life; no one comes to the Father but through Me." (John 14:6) So, Jesus is the Truth; He gives the Spirit of Truth (John 14:17) to lead us into all Truth (John 16:13), and says, "Sanctify them in the truth; YOUR WORD IS TRUTH." (John 17:17) So, Scripture is Truth. It is "God-breathed," and "profitable" for all of life (2 Tim 3:16):

- The TRUTH about Marriage and Family is in the Bible.
- The TRUTH about Sexuality, Manhood and Femininity is in the Bible.
- The TRUTH about Children and Discipline and Education is in the Bible.
- The TRUTH about Ethics, Morals, Law, right and wrong, is in the Bible.
- And, the TRUTH about the only GOD is in the Bible.

"THE SUM OF YOUR WORD IS TRUTH" the Psalmist said (119:160) It's the TRUTH that sets us free! (John 8:32) Philosophies and theories that get dressed-up in Scripture, are here today-gone tomorrow. Our fad-driven, Christian-consumerism is baited by tricks, hype, hucksters and trends: "7 Steps to this", "3 Steps to that," and "Abracadabra!", when all you need is the TRUTH! Sola Scriptura.

Prayer

My Father, my Bible holds the answers to all of life. Please save me from the self-help, quick-fix, talk-show syndrome, and renew my mind to think like Your Word. Thank You Lord.

Day Eleven

Scripture

Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the Praetorium and gathered the whole Roman cohort around Him. {28} They stripped him and put a scarlet robe on Him. {29} And after twisting together a CROWN of thorns, they put it on His head, and a reed in His right hand; and they knelt down before Him and mocked Him, saying, "Hail King of the Jews" Matt 27:27-29

The Crown

Devotional

As He faltered from the flagellum-flogging that shredded His body to within an inch of its life, slipping in the dripping of His own precious blood, hundreds of jeering soldiers mocked His monarchy. In sarcastic tribute, the vicious drama continued as they added insult to injury, and "kept beating His head with a reed, and spitting on Him, and kneeling and bowing before Him." (Mark15:19) His "royal" robe was stripped; His "ruling" rod used to imbed His derisive "crown" into His head. He was the laughing stock at the end of an escalating frenzy!

But Christ had to become the visual paradox of frailty to transcend, earthly kingdom; so that all powers could bow to the King whose Kingdom can never be shaken. (Heb 12:28) The day is soon when "the heavens will open, and He who is called Faithful and True, will have on His head many CROWNS; clothed with a ROBE dipped in blood, and His name is called the Word of God, and He will rule the nations with a ROD of iron; And on His robe and on His thigh He has a name written "KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS." (Revelation 19:11-16)

Prayer

God, you are a confounding genius! You invert to convert! Hasten the day when I get to cast my crown before the One who's Kingdom is without end! (Rev 4:10; Luke 1:33) I love you, Lord. Thank You Lord.

Day Twelve

Scripture

“Pilate then took Jesus and SCOURGED Him” John 19:1 “Surely our griefs He Himself bore, and our sorrows He carried; yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. but He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; the chastening for our well-being fell upon Him, and by His SCOURGING we are HEALED.” Isaiah 53:4-5

The Healer

Devotional

John 19 tells us that Jesus was SCOURGED. This is the whipping post, where a man's hands are bound above his head, his legs suspended, his body extended. There would be two scourgers, alternating their flogging, using what was a short-handed whip with leather strands, each strand bound off at the tip with a sharp piece of metal or stone. The body of the prisoner would be completely mutilated by the flogging, exposing and lacerating internal organs. It was not uncommon for prisoners to die there. 700 years before Jesus, Isaiah 50:6 foretells, "I gave My back to those who strike Me, and My cheeks to those who pluck out the beard; I did not cover My face from humiliation and spitting".

We read in Isaiah 53 that we are HEALED by Christ's SCOURGING. It is interesting to note that in the NT. the word "scourge" (mastix Gr), is the same word used for "disease." For example, Luke 7:21: "At that very time He cured many people of diseases." "When Jesus was scourged, He took our scourge (disease); when He was afflicted, He took our afflictions (sicknesses). He became our sickness through His suffering. What an incalculable price Christ paid to infect Himself with our DISEASE, and then to pay for it with his SCOURGING! Oh, thank You, God!

Prayer

Lord, I believe, as sure as your blood has forgiven me, and you desire that none should perish, so too, I believe that the shredded body of my mutilated Messiah has HEALED me, and You desire for ALL to be HEALED!

Day Thirteen

Scripture

and they began to come up to Him and say, "Hail, King of the Jews!" and to give Him slaps in the face... John 19:3 They spat on Him, and took the reed and began to BEAT Him on the head. After they had mocked Him, they took a scarlet robe off Him and put His own garments back on Him, and led Him away to crucify Him. Matthew 27: 30-31

The Suffering

Devotional

Jesus said, "It was NECESSARY for the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into His glory" (Luke 24:26)

Why was it necessary for Christ to suffer these things and to enter into His glory?" (Luke 24:26)

Why was it necessary for Christ to suffer?

Hebrews 2:10 tells us, "For it was FITTING for God..in bringing many sons to glory, to PERFECT the author of their salvation through sufferings" and Isaiah 53:10 says, "But the Lord was pleased to crush Him, putting Him to grief; If he would render Himself as a guilt offering..."

So, Christ had to suffer as a guilt offering because:

1. It pleased the Father (Is 53:10)
2. It brought many sons to glory (Heb 2:10), and
3. It was patterned for you and I (1 Peter 2:21)

Hebrews 5:8 says, "Although He was a Son, He learned OBEDIENCE from the things which He suffered." Suffering is like the chisel of a master sculptor being driven into a block of granite. Whereas others see "rough edges" He sees the polished masterpiece! (Eph 2:10 and Phil 1:6). Philippians 1:29 says, "For to you it has been granted for Christ's sake, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake" because "You have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps." (1 Peter 2:21) Suffering develops the meekness of OBEDIENCE. Suffering chips away at the alabaster jar of our hearts until the fragrance of (and for) Christ is released.

Prayer

Father, I've got some "rough edges" I yield to your masterful hands in bringing me through to full, mature obedience.

Day Fourteen

Scripture

They took Jesus, therefore, and He went out, bearing His own CROSS, to the place called the Place of a Skull, which is called in Hebrew, Golgotha. There they crucified Him, and with Him two other men, one on either side, and Jesus in between. John 19:17-18

The Cross

Devotional

The cross is the humble hinge of history and humanity-God in human flesh dying for the sins of the whole world. "He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross". (Philippians 2:8)

"He poured Himself out to death, and was numbered with the transgressors; yet He Himself bore the sin of many, and interceded for the transgressors." (Isaiah 53:12)

When we look at the Cross, it is culmination of the Incarnation- the epitome of humility. Crucified in weakness (2 Cor 13:4) between two thieves, Christ's intercession for the "losers" of this world is the manifest humility of heaven, and indeed, the hope of all earth! "For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin." (Hebrews 4:15)

Christ's identification with weakness, distances those who are the so-called "achievers" or "winners" in life. "How can the cross be a win-win?" they ask. "It just doesn't make sense." 1 Corinthians 1:18 says, "For the word of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God."

If you can choose today to not be ashamed of the cross, then the weakness of God becomes the power for you to live a strong Christian life.

Prayer

Father, "May it never be that I would boast, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world." (Galatians 6:14)

Day Fifteen

Scripture

And when they had CRUCIFIED Him, they divided up His garments among themselves by casting lots.
Matt 27:35

The Crucifixion

Devotional

It is estimated that by the time Christ headed towards "The Skull" the Romans had crucified over 30,000 men in Israel alone! So, having three more men crucified on this day was just "another day at the office" for these calloused soldiers. Frederick Farrar in his book, "The Life of Christ" says, "First century executions sought an agonizing torture which completely humiliated the prisoner."

What becomes really fascinating though, is that Jesus be distinguished amidst 30,000 other victims! I mean, who are these other dead men? Does anyone know their names? How come Jesus didn't get lost in the blur of these perpetual executions? Why does history know HIS name? Scripture says, "He was numbered amongst the transgressors" (30,000 of them!), and yet, above His head written- "This is JESUS, the King of the Jews". (Matt 27: 37) And Philippians says, "He humbled Himself...to the point of death...on a cross. For this reason, God exalted Him, and gave Him the name which is above every name...the name of JESUS." (2:8-10)

Jesus was pierced through for our transgressions (Isaiah 53:5) and Psalm 22 records "They pierced my hands and my feet." I can count all my bones they divide my garments among them, and for my clothing they cast lots." The soldiers may have missed Who that was that day, but history hasn't, and you shouldn't either!

Prayer

Father, thank you for exalting Jesus so far above the level that my transgressions dragged Him down to.

Day Sixteen

Scripture

But Jesus was saying, "Father, FORGIVE them; for they do not know what they are doing". And they cast lots, dividing up His garments among themselves. Luke 23:34

Forgive

Devotional

The great Cross-cry: "FATHER, FORGIVE THEM!" This is yet another example of the mystifying love of a Savior who sucks in His dying breath, to breath out a blessing on the cursed! That is truly confounding!

But this forgiveness is not a random comforter tossed over the bed of iniquity to ensure that we don't have any "prickly" bits. No. This forgiveness is directly proportional to the degree that we are pricked in our hearts to repent: Luke 24 says, "Christ would suffer and rise again from the dead the third day, and that REPENTANCE FOR FORGIVENESS OF SINS would be proclaimed in His name to all the nations." (46-47); and so too in Acts 5:31 "He...grants REPENTANCE OF SINS would be proclaimed in His name to all the nations." Repentance and forgiveness are bedfellows-two sides of the same coin-you can't have one without the other. But, sadly, many believers flip a coin ("cast lots") with "heads you win, tails you lose," and they live in a "forgiveness" without any fruits of repentance. But this coin lands on its edge!

Forgiveness is not a grace "cookie jar" that we dip into. Forgiveness is a heavenly resource, distilled in the blood of Jesus at excruciating cost. We can't be flip with the sacred. This blood was expensive! Hebrews 9:22 says, "without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness."

Prayer

Lord Jesus, thank you for the eternal ring of your grace in the cross-cry of forgiveness. I pray that my heart would never be calloused with familiarity towards your exquisite blood-wrought mercy,

Day Seventeen

Scripture

And he was saying, "Jesus, remember me when You come in Your kingdom" And He said to him, "Truly I say to you, today you shall be with Me in Paradise" Luke 23:42-43

The Mediator

Devotional

Christ's arbitration is between God and man, just as He is seen here interceding for the thief on the cross. So 1 Timothy says, "There is one God, and one MEDIATOR between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself as a ransom for all." (2:5-6)

As mediator, because Jesus is both truly human and fully God, He is able to represent both sides in God's dispute with sinful man, and by His blood He has fully satisfied divine justice, guaranteed a new and better covenant, and has restored the relationship between God and man. Hebrews 8:6 says, "He is the MEDIATOR of a better covenant, which has been enacted on better promises" and Hebrews 12:24 says, "Jesus, (is) the MEDIATOR of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood, which speaks better than the blood of Abel."

The New Covenant is not a letter written in ink like the Law, but rather it is the blood of Christ that speaks from Him who ever lives to intercede for you and I (Heb 7:25) Jesus doesn't have to turn to a page in a book to get a justice clause to put you in the right standing before God. His blood speaks volumes! "For this reason He is the MEDIATOR of a new covenant, so that...those who have been called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance." (Hebrews 9:15)

Prayer

Jesus, thank You for your intense mediation on my behalf before the Father, Thank You that your blood forever speaks better things, and secures the promise of eternal inheritance for me.

Day Eighteen

Scripture

And those passing by were hurling abuse at Him, wagging their heads and saying, "You who are going to destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, save Yourself! If You are the Son of God, come down from the cross." Matt 27:39-40

Propitiation

Devotional

What Jesus was rebuilding through the Cross was so much more than bricks and mortar. In making compensation for you and I through His body, Christ became both the sacrifice and the officiating High Priest of the obligatory oblation! Hebrews 2:17 says, "Therefore, He had to be made like His brethren in all things, so that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make PROPITIATION for the sins of the people".

1 John 2:2 says, "He Himself is the PROPITIATION for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world," and 1 John 4:10 says, "In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the PROPITIATION for our sins."

What does PROPITIATION mean?

It means to conciliate and appease. Specifically, it is the benefit of Christ's blood for the believer in removing the Father's wrath. God is obligated by His immutable Self to judge sin. Christ bore that judgement as our substitute! That's why propitiation is love! Jesus paid the necessary price to expiate and remove the sins of man. (Expiation is "to suffer punishment (judgement) for wrongdoing)

The result of PROPITIATION is:

1. Justice is settled
2. Mercy for man
3. Fellowship/friendship with God for man
4. Man is not guilty
5. The power of sin is broken, and I am free!

Prayer

Lord, I could never have imagined the "Good News" being this good! I hope that my life will forever say, "Thank You."

Day Nineteen

Scripture

He made Him who knew no SIN to be SIN on our behalf, so that we might become the RIGHTEOUSNESS of God in Him. 2 Corinthians 5:21

Sin

Devotional

Sin is the problem.

When Adam sinned, "...sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because ALL sinned". (Romans 5:12) And from that time, throughout history, sacrifices have been offered to atone for our guilt before God. We understand from 2 Cor. 5:21 that "God made Him who knew no SIN to be SIN on our behalf, so that we might become the RIGHTEOUSNESS of God in Him."

Jesus is the solution.

"...God sent His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and as an OFFERING for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh." (Romans 8:3)
"For Christ also died for sins ONCE FOR ALL, the just for the unjust, so that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit." (1 Peter 3:18)

Because Jesus had become our sin, and because sin demanded the penalty of death (Rom 1:32/Rom 6/23), Christ died for sins, and by that transaction we receive the free gift of righteousness! An impossible state to attain by any man, now freely ours by grace of God, because "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death." (Romans 8:2) SIN NO LONGER HAS DOMINION OVER YOU! (Rom 6:14)

Prayer

Jesus, thank you for becoming my substitute on the cross and taking my penalty in your body. I want to thank you that, not only am I forgiven, but I'm empowered by righteousness to have dominion over sin.

Day Twenty

Scripture

In Him we have REDEMPTION through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace. Ephesians 1:7

Redeemer

Devotional

"...and not through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood, He entered the holy place once for all, having obtained eternal REDEMPTION." (Hebrews 9:12) 1 Peter 1:18-19 says, "Knowing that you were not REDEEMED with perishable things like silver or gold...but with PRECIOUS BLOOD, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ." In Biblical redemption, only a close relative had the right to purchase someone out of slavery. That's why Jesus had to become a human being in order to be a true kinsman-redeemer! As the incarnate Redeemer, Jesus didn't pay for our freedom from slavery to sin with money-He ransomed us with his own priceless blood! (1 Timothy 2:6)

Now that you've been bought at a price... glorify God in your body," (1 Corinthians 6:20) because you've been "justified as a gift by His grace through the REDEMPTION which is in Christ Jesus." (Rom 3:24), and you've been "rescued from the domain of darkness, and transferred to the kingdom of His beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins." (Colossians 1:13-14) HALLELUJAH!

But that's not all!

"God sent forth His Son..to redeem those under the Law, that we might receive adoption as sons...therefore you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God!" Galatians 4:4-7

Prayer

Father, I know that I am no longer a slave to sin. Thank you for rescuing me, for adopting me, and freeing me from darkness into your Kingdom. I love you!

Day Twenty One

Scripture

Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a CURSE for us-for it is written, "CURSED IS EVERYONE WHO HANGS ON A TREE"- in order that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we would receive the promise of the Spirit through faith. Galatians 3:13-14

Cursed

Devotional

To the Jewish mind, "curse" meant judgment without mercy (see Heb. 10:28 with James 2:13). It included both the sentence for the crime as well as the ruin. Scripture tells us that Jesus became the curse for us—meaning, He was executed with vengeance, and sentenced to total destruction in our stead. Based on Deut 21:23, a Jew would find it extremely hard to accept Jesus as Messiah, because the Messiah's being cursed by God and having to hang on a tree was incomprehensible. To them, Jesus' crucifixion was conclusive proof that He was not the promised Messiah. This is why when we preach Christ crucified, it is "a stumbling block to the Jews...but to those who are the called...Christ is the power of God!" (1 Cor 1:23-24)

Jesus becoming our curse, empowered me for thy "blessing of Abraham." What is that? Is it lots of money? A flashy car? "Only the best"? Well, Acts 3:25-26 makes it pretty clear that it's not all that frivolous stuff: God said to Abraham, "IN YOUR SEED ALL THE FAMILIES OF THE EARTH SHALL BE BLESSED." "For you first, God raised up His Servant and sent Him to BLESS YOU by TURNING EVERY ONE OF YOU FROM YOUR WICKED WAYS." The "blessing of Abraham" is justification by faith! Salvation to the Gentiles! The CURSE of eternal damnation has been broken by Christ's broken body! I am free to walk in repentance and forgiveness with my father Abraham because Jesus was hung on a tree for me.

Prayer

THANK YOU LORD!

Day Twenty Two

Scripture

Now from the sixth hour darkness fell upon all the land until the ninth hour. About the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, "ELI, ELI, LAMA SABACHTHANI?" that is, "MY GOD, MY GOD, WHY HAVE YOU FORSAKEN ME?" And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice, and yielded up His spirit. Matthew 27:45-46, 50

Forsaken

Devotional

The airport is an amazing picture of the effects of separation. Although it is highly probable that relatives will see one another at sometime in the future, and may not even be going very far, still, hearts break, and the deep wells of yearning unblock into springs from our eyes.

For three hours of darkness, Jesus experienced the torment of separation and abandonment from the Father. For someone who had not only lived in unbroken communion and dependence (John 5:19) upon the Father here on earth, but had been for eternity one with Him, this brief broken bond was beyond all imaginable heart break for the Son (and for the Father!)

For God to turn His back, because "He cannot look on wickedness" (Hab. 1:13), was altogether TOO FAR and TOO MUCH for Jesus to bear! "Reproach has broken my heart and I am so sick. I looked for sympathy, but there is none...they gave me vinegar to drink." (Psalm 69:20-21) But in a hidden masterstroke of Divine genius, Jesus "yielded up His spirit" in order to re-engage divine communion with His Father. ("For this reason the Father loves Me, because I lay down My life so that I may take it again." John 10:17) Jesus knew that the Scriptures said, "YOU WILL NOT ABANDON (forsake) MY SOUL TO HADES." (Acts 2:27) He was FORSAKEN at the Cross, but Scripture precluded abandonment in the grave, so Jesu died on purpose to enjoin himself to the Father again. Brilliant!

Prayer

Father, I pray that I will be determined to stay in unbroken communion with You!

Day Twenty Three

Scripture

For if while we were enemies we were RECONCILED to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been RECONCILED, we shall be saved by His life. And not only this, but we also exult in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation. Romans 5:10-11

Reconciliation

Devotional

This privilege of friendship with God is ours solely by the blood of Christ: "but now in Christ you who formerly were far off have been BROUGHT NEAR by the blood of Christ." (Ephesians 2:13) The reconciliation is secured for enemies, so that it can be shown beyond all doubt that man has nothing to do with the transaction: "And through him to RECONCILE all things to Himself, having made peace through the BLOOD of His cross ...and although you were formerly alienated and hostile...He has now RECONCILED you in His fleshly body through death, in order to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach." (Colossians 1:20-22)

I don't know if you've ever been around somebody whose presence inspires you to "lift your game." Perhaps it has been a special invitation to a special occasion. Typically we would want to "dress up" for the occasion. In the reconciliation, we have been invited into the distinguished company of God, and doubtless we feel like we need to "clean up our act." But Christ has cleaned us up by His blood, "in order to present us before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach." Don't ever worry about how you look when you come to God- just come- because He is looking at the blood...even when you're an enemy! "God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them." (2 Corinthians 5:19)

Prayer

Lord God, I exult in You through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom I have now received the reconciliation!

Day Twenty Four

Scripture

And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice, and yielded up His spirit. And behold, the VEIL OF THE TEMPLE WAS TORN in two from top to bottom; and the earth shook and the rocks split. Matt 27:50

Atonement

Devotional

Atonement, simply understood, is Jesus "at-one-moment"-restoring harmony between God and man by paying for sins through its sacrificial blood. On the Jews' most holy day-"Yom Kippur"-the Day of Atonement, the high priest, by God's permission, entered behind the VEIL into the Holy of Holies once a year to sprinkle blood sacrifices for his own sin and the sins of the people upon the "mercy seat" of the Ark [the "place of propitiation." (see day 18)]

"But when Christ appeared as a High Priest of the good things to come, He entered through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not of this creation; and not through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood He entered the Holy place ONCE FOR ALL, having obtained ETERNAL REDEMPTION." Hebrews 9:11-12

THE ETERNAL BLOOD OF CHRIST SPEAKS MERCY FOREVER!

That the veil was torn at the cross is so significant! "We therefore have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the VEIL, that is, His flesh, and since we have a Great Priest over the house of God (Hebrews 10:19-21) "...we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the ATONEMENT." (Romans 5:11) We have been made one with God by the blood of Jesus! (1 Cor 6:17)

Prayer

Father, I therefore with confidence draw near to the Throne of Grace, [so that I] may receive MERCY and find grace to help in time of need. Hebrews 4:16

Day Twenty Five

Scripture

And Jesus, crying out with a loud voice, said, "Father, INTO YOUR HANDS I COMMIT MY SPIRIT." Having said this, He BREATHED HIS LAST. Luke 23:46

Death

Devotional

Christ's volitional death (John 10:18) achieved the intentional authority for God to destroy forces that had held man captive from the beginning of time. Hebrews 2 says, we see Jesus, because of His suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor, so that by the grace of God He might taste death for everyone. Therefore, THROUGH DEATH He (rendered) powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil and (freed) those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives."

Satan knew that sin held the death penalty, and he held that intimidation over man throughout their lives. BUT THEN JESUS TASTED DEATH FOR EVERYONE! And in so doing, stripped the power of physical, spiritual and eternal death from Satan, to where scripture says, "O DEATH, WHERE IS YOUR VICTORY? O DEATH, WHERE IS YOUR STING"? (1 Corinthians 15:55)

How did Jesus do this? "When we were dead in our transgressions, He made us alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions, having canceled out the certificate of debt...and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. When He had disarmed the rulers and authorities, He made a public display of them, having triumphed over them through (the cross)." (Colossians 2:13-15)

That's how!

Prayer

Jesus, thank you for making death the door to You. One day I'll come knocking, and I know You'll let me in because You have the keys of death and the grave. (Rev 1:18)

Day Twenty Six

Scripture

Therefore when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, "IT IS FINISHED!" And He bowed His head and gave up His spirit. John 19:30

Finished

Devotional

Whereas Jesus could have died from physical injury at almost any point of His excruciating Passion, he still held the power to determine when the final breath would be drawn: "No one has taken (my life) away from Me; but I lay it down on My own initiative..." John 10:18

Staying in control to finish His course, Jesus released His final breath with the cry of victorious purpose: "IT IS FINISHED!" Not, "I am finished!" "IT," His redemptive work. There was nothing left undone; nothing missing, totally complete, and as the Greek word suggests, "PAID IN FULL"!

When the "wolf" is at the door (Gen 4:7), and the "debt collector" has come to accuse the brethren (Rev 12:10), to try and repossess what has been irrevocably secured for us by Christ (Rom 8:33), it is the most reassuring conviction to be able to stand in the place where "the certificate of debt (has been) canceled because He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross." (Colossians 2:14) IT HAS BEEN PAID IN FULL! There is no debt collection, because Jesus has paid the full ransom! (1 Tim 2:6) "Who will bring a charge against God's elect? God is the one who

Prayer

Jesus, my faith is in Your finished work. I do not look to myself. I couldn't pay, and I still can't. I was bankrupt in sin, and you paid the penalty for me to walk off "scott-free" Thank you Lord.

Day Twenty Seven

Scripture

But one of the soldiers
pierced His side with a spear,
and immediately BLOOD and
water came out. John 19:34

His Blood

Devotional

How the believer benefits from the precious blood of Christ:

- 1 The New Will and Testament is secured by His blood (Matt 26:28, et al)
- 2 The Church is purchased by His Blood (Acts 20:28)
- 3 Propitiation is by His Blood (Rom 3:25)
- 4 Justification is by His Blood (Rom 5:9)
- 5 Redemption is by His Blood (Eph 1:7)
- 6 Reconciliation is by His Blood (Eph 2:13)
- 7 Peace is by His Blood (Col 1:20)
- 8 Atonement is by His Blood (Heb 9:12)
- 9 A clean conscience is by His Blood (Heb 9:14)
- 10 Forgiveness is by His Blood (Heb 9:22)
- 11 Sanctification is by His Blood (Heb 10:29)
- 12 Friendship with God is by His Blood (Heb 10:19)
- 13 Protection is by His Blood (Heb 11:28)
- 14 Mercy is by His Blood (Heb 12:24)
- 15 Cleansing is by His Blood (1 John 1:7)

Knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, but with PRECIOUS BLOOD, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ. (1 Peter 1:18-19)

Prayer

Jesus: The scriptures say that the life of the flesh is in the blood. (Lev 17:11) I pray that these amazing life benefits that you have secured through your sacrifice on the cross, would become an ever-increasing reality to my life. Thank you so much.

Day Twenty Eight

Scripture

When it was evening, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who himself had also become a disciple of Jesus. This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate ordered it to be given to him. And Joseph took the body wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, and laid it in his own new TOMB, which he had hewn out in the rock; and he rolled a large stone against the entrance of the tomb and went away. (Matthew 27:57-60)

Burial

Devotional

The burial of Jesus represents, not simply another natural stage in the process of death, but rather the deliberate sovereign plan of God to fulfill every prophesied Messianic detail. Because corpses were of no consequence to the Romans, bodies of criminals were generally tossed into common, open graves, and left for birds and scavengers to devour, or thrown into garbage dumps, like Gehenna, where they were burned. So the fact that Joseph asked for the body of Jesus is profoundly poignant, because this action fulfilled Isaiah 53:9, "His grave was assigned with wicked men, yet He was with a rich man in His death" Jesus was destined for a garbage dump, a "wicked" grave, but instead a rich man offered his own new tomb!

Jesus Himself prophesied, "for just as JONAH WAS THREE DAYS AND THREE NIGHTS IN THE BELLY OF THE SEA MONSTER, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the HEART OF THE EARTH" Matthew 12:40 or, If Jesus was tossed into an open grave, His own prophecy would have been wrong. He had to be sealed in the belly of a new tomb!

And the tomb formed a dramatic precursor for all the Apostolic preaching relating to the resurrection that ensued from this point.

Prayer

Father, because Christ's BURIAL was essential to your predetermined will, I understand that my "burial" (baptism) is not an "option," but is essential for my new life in Christ.

Day Twenty Nine

Scripture

But on the first day of the week at early dawn, they came to the tomb bringing the spices which they had prepared. And they found the stone rolled away from the tomb. But when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. While they were perplexed about this, behold, two men suddenly stood near them in dazzling clothing...the men said to them, "Why do you seek the living One among the dead? He is not here, but He has RISEN. Remember how He spoke to you while He was still in Galilee, saying that the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again." Luke 24:1-7

The Resurrection

Devotional

The Resurrection was, without a doubt, the crescendo of the Redemption plan, and formed the convicting backbone of all Apostolic preaching: "Men of Israel, listen to these words: Jesus the Nazarene, a man attested to by God with miracles and wonders and signs...this Man, delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death. But GOD RAISED HIM UP AGAIN, putting an end to the agony of death, since it was impossible for Him to be held in its power. Acts 2:22-24

Jesus had many times prophesied that He would rise from the dead on the third day. (Luke 18:33, et al). Even armed with His distinguished Person, can you imagine where we would be if Christ did not rise? This would just be another man-made religion built on moral principles from a good teacher, and Paul says, "If Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is vain, your faith also is vain." (1 Corinthians 15:14)

But he goes on to say, "BUT NOW CHRIST HAS BEEN RAISED FROM THE DEAD."

Romans 1:4 says, "He was declared the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead, according to the Spirit of holiness, Jesus Christ our Lord." The resurrection is irrefutable proof of Christ's deity!

Prayer

Father, the Scripture says, "that if you confess with your mouth Jesus is Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved." (Romans 10:9) Jesus, I believe this with all of my heart!

Day Thirty

Scripture

And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. GO therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Matthew 28:18-20

The Great Commissions

Devotional

In the final stage of the "Via Dolorosa," Jesus said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation" (Mark 16:15)

This is the highest order of Christian responsibility that exists. Every believer is called to preach the Gospel. We can hide behind godly substitutes like orphanages, relief and feeding programs, etc. And I'm not against these, it's just that other religions (and celebrities and business) do it even better than we do! But what they can't do is PREACH CHRIST! And that is what the early church did to "turn the world upside down!" (Acts 17:6) Col 1:28 says, "Him we preach!" Sometimes all we're preaching are self-help programs, or the social gospel, or fund-raising schemes! Paul says, "For we do not preach ourselves but CHRIST JESUS AS LORD..." (2 Corinthians 4:5)

Paul charges Timothy to "Preach the word of God...whether the time is favorable or not...(2 Timothy 4:2 NLT) What Paul was saying is that there is a right time to preach, and when it's the wrong time--keep preaching! ("For we cannot stop speaking...") (Peter- Acts 4:20)

Sometimes our most convincing execution of the Great Commission in this day is how well we advertise our church, or Twitter post, or website. But that is not what the power of the Holy Spirit is for. (Acts 1:8) If we simply get back to what the power of the Holy Spirit is for (Acts 1:8), if we simply get back to what the early church preached, we will preach CHRIST ALONE; as the did. (1 Cor 2:1-5) Salvation will turn spring up; because the "Gospel is the power of God for Salvation," (Rom. 1:6) not our good works!

Prayer

Father, please forgive me for hiding behind Christian duty, and not living out my Christian responsibility to preach Christ.

Thank You

To we who are only “looking in a mirror dimly” the revealing of Jesus Christ through the Scriptures is absolutely rapturous! No wonder He was all they preached! Can you imagine what it is going to be like when we see Him face-to-face?

That's why Paul exclaimed: "Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgements and unfathomable His ways." Romans 11:33

I'm fascinated and captivated with Jesus. His intrigue and mystery pulls on my soul.

Thank you for this, Lord... and I know tomorrow, I'll be saying that again!

...saying with a loud voice, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing. Revelation 5:12