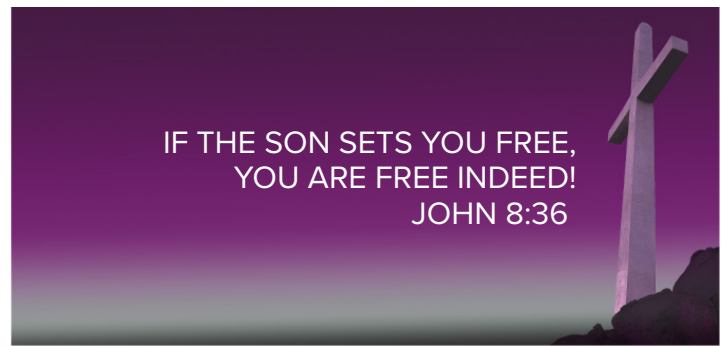


Jesus IOI

“Grace Thoughts”



A short devotional to help get you excited about Jesus!

“My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?” –Matthew 27:46

Throughout my life, I was assured of the ever-present help of my parents. I was on a pastoral retreat, with other ministers, in one of the National Parks of the United States. Something went terribly wrong, and I experienced food or water poisoning that turned life-threatening within two hours. After the paramedics came to that beautiful and remote hotel, they told me that I had to remain there for a few days to regain my strength. Everyone in my group was leaving, and I would have to stay there alone. Within a few minutes, my parents had packed and were on their way to me and stayed with me until I was strong enough to travel. I never felt abandoned by them, not even in the darkest and most difficult circumstances.

As close as our human relationships may be, it is impossible for us to fully understand the intimacy that exists between Jesus and His Heavenly Father. This is why the crucifixion narrative, found in Matthew 27:46, in which Jesus asks *why* God had abandoned Him, seems such a mystery to us. About the ninth hour (3:00 P.M.), which was the time of the evening sacrifice, Jesus cried out the words recorded in Psalm 22:1. I am absolutely amazed that He who was called Immanuel (Matthew 1:23), "God with us," was now agonizing about *why* God had abandoned Him. The "El" in Immanu-El, is the same God as in "*Eli, Eli . . . My God, My God*" (Matthew 27:46). It is striking that Jesus had such a deep awareness of the loss of God's intimate presence in His hour of darkness, that He called Him "God" (the only time in Matthew), instead of "Father" as He regularly did. Furthermore, I am amazed that Jesus, in His time of utter distress and in the midst of His desolation, used the first-person possessive pronoun, "*my God*," still holding on to His trust in God as His God. Jesus was the Sin Bearer, the Representative and Substitute of the human race. He felt the abandonment of His Father as our sin was placed upon Him. If you ever wonder if God has forsaken you due to wrong choices and sin, remember that Jesus was abandoned in your place so that you may never be. God will never cast you out! He will never leave you, nor forsake you!