

It's All about Jesus

31 Preview Devotionals from an Upcoming One-Year Devotional, Which Will Be Used as a Fundraiser—as a Collective Birthday Gift for Jesus on Christmas Day—to Spread the Gospel through 100 Reputable Ministries, Requesting Every Christian's Participation

Jan Blonk

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All my books are used as a fundraiser for the spread of the gospel through reputable ministries

www.thecauseofchrist.com

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The Big Ifs and Reason for This Book

What if every Christian would participate in a collective birthday gift for Jesus with only \$5.00, to raise funds for the spread of His gospel through 100 reputable ministries? Wouldn't that be phenomenal?

What if their \$5.00 would give them a one-year devotional that would encourage them in their faith and walk with Jesus, being "the means" of this gospel-fundraiser?

What if the "what ifs" became a reality and every Christian would participate in a collective birthday gift for Jesus with only \$5.00? The sky would be the limit!

It's All about Jesus: The Bible's Grand Testimony will be released on Christmas Day. You'll be able to preorder this one-year devotional as of October 1st for only \$5.00 (the release price on Christmas Day will be \$9.99).

Here are two important questions for you:

Will the \$5.00 be worth your participation in a collective birthday gift for Jesus, raising funds for the spread of His gospel through 100 reputable ministries?

Will the \$5.00 be worth the price of this one-year devotional, receiving real value for your purchase?

While I may be biased, I wholeheartedly believe that the one-year devotional will be worth your \$5.00 purchase, not even considering the funds we'll be able to raise for these 100 ministries: www.thecauseofchrist.com/ministries

This book contains 31 preview devotionals from the upcoming one-year devotional. They are meant to whet your appetite and encourage your participation in Jesus' collective birthday gift.

Can you even begin to imagine what can (and will!) be accomplished when every Christian joins His birthday gift with only \$5.00?

Will you participate in Jesus' collective birthday gift? Here are seven ways you can do so:

1. Join the *It's All about Jesus* Blog. You'll receive faith-encouraging devotionals and regular updates: www.thecauseofchrist.com/blog
2. "Like" *It's All about Jesus* on Facebook: www.facebook.com/Unite4Christ
3. "Follow" *It's All about Jesus* on Twitter: www.twitter.com/unite4Christ
4. "Follow" *It's All about Jesus* on Instagram: www.instagram.com/unite4christ
5. Preorder *It's All about Jesus* between October 1st and December 24th for only \$5.00.

6. Ask your church to participate in Jesus' collective birthday gift, raising funds for the spread of His gospel through 100 reputable ministries.
7. Share this preview book and Jesus' collective birthday gift on your social media. The designated hashtag is #Unite4Christ

When we unite as Christians for the spread of the gospel through these 100 ministries, we can easily raise significant funds. Ultimately, when you buy *It's All about Jesus*, you'll be investing in these ministries, helping them to fulfill their God-given mission.

Here's the link to the *Introduction*: www.thecauseofchrist.com/introduction-its-all-about-jesus

If you would like to know more on how this gospel-fundraiser came about, you can click this link: www.thecauseofchrist.com/spiritual-journey

The cover photo is by [Ben White](#) on [Unsplash](#)

Sincerely,

Mr. Jan Blonk
www.thecauseofchrist.com

January 7

Our Light

The LORD is my light.

Psalm 27:1

Often, we try to be what only Jesus is. Instead of simply receiving from Him with childlike faith, we attempt to produce our own light. Our frustration increases because we've not been saved to do so. We're like the moon that has no light of its own, but receives it from the sun and reflects it accordingly.

Is that too humbling for us? Adam and Eve's motivation to sin was to become like God, wanting to be more than what they were—dependent creatures. They sought independence from their Life-Giver, which turned out into a catastrophic deception.

Ours is always the receiving and reflecting, while it is Jesus who shines forth His light in and through our lives. Could it be that our lives are often lightless because we're trying to be what only He is? Rather, we should remove any obstacle that stands in the way of receiving His light.

When the earth is between the sun and moon, we have a lunar eclipse—the moon is without the light of the sun. Even so, the “earth” can stand between Jesus and us. As a result, not much light, if any, is received and reflected.

Let us be diligent to remove everything that stands between Him and us, so that we'll experience His radiant light. Not only will we be greatly blessed by it, but also those around us. Ultimately, we've been saved to behold His shining face and reflect it accordingly.

January 17

Guiltless

Guiltless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.

1 Corinthians 1:8

Two weeks ago, we considered “the day of Jesus Christ.” That day will only be about Him. Today, we have another reference to it. His day will start when God wraps up this “present evil age” (Gal. 1:4) and launches “the age to come” (Heb. 6:5). We’ll then enjoy Jesus’ finished work to the fullest, without end. The Father will confirm His eternal verdict: not guilty. Not guilty of anything!

Amazingly, Paul addressed a church that wasn’t known for its holiness. Rather, he wrote: “But I, brothers, could not address you as spiritual people, but as people of the flesh, as infants in Christ” (1 Cor. 3:1). There wasn’t much difference between these Corinthian believers and unbelievers. Nevertheless, even though they were only “infants in Christ,” they were *in Christ*. They were the eternal beneficiaries of all the spiritual blessings of the gospel, including today’s verse.

Whether you’re a weak or strong believer, whether you’re an infant or a mature one, today’s truth is applicable to everyone who has received Jesus by faith. His blood will so wash you that you’ll be spotless in the Father’s sight. His righteousness will so clothe you that the Father will express His infinite favor toward you throughout endless ages.

When “the day of our Lord Jesus Christ” begins, nothing and no one will be the focus, including our past sins. It will only be about Him—who He is and what He has accomplished and obtained for all who are *in Him*. That day will last forever: “And night will be no more” (Rev. 22:5).

February 3

Our Endeavor

But if, in our endeavor to be justified in Christ.

Galatians 2:17

The Greek word for *endeavor* can also be translated as: “To seek in order to find,” and, “to seek after, seek for, aim at, strive after.” The fact that we’re “justified in Christ”—declared righteous for His sake—isn’t only a God-ordained reality; it’s also a continual striving to live in that truth. There are a thousand thoughts and feelings that try to divert us from doing so. More than we are aware of.

Earlier, Paul wrote: “I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting him who called you in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel” (Gal. 1:6). The Galatian believers had shifted from *solely* relying on Jesus for their right standing before God to a works-oriented mindset. Since human nature is a mirror of our own heart, we must be on guard against such natural proneness.

As Christians, we need to constantly affirm the truth that Jesus is our righteousness, not only when it comes to our *position* before God, but also in relation to our *practice* toward Him. We must strive to daily live in that reality, which is the best ground to cultivate humility.

We see the same in Hebrews, addressing believers to *strive* to enter God’s rest: “So then, there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God, for whoever has entered God’s rest has also rested from his works as God did from his. *Let us therefore strive to enter that rest?*” (Heb. 4:9-11).

Notice that the author included himself. As he indicated, it’s possible for believers to fall short of the spiritual rest that Jesus has obtained. Are you completely resting in His finished work? Are you daily endeavoring “to be justified in Christ”? He is the fullness of our peace, joy, and hope.

February 13

Don't Withhold

Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due, when it is in your power to do it.

Proverbs 3:27

When God created man, He created him in His image, after His likeness (see Gen. 1:26-27). You and I were made to image-forth our Creator in who we are and what we do. Needless to say, sin horrendously marred that likeness. It's wasn't annihilated, though.

Whenever we see someone doing something commendable, we have to realize that the attitude and action are rooted in God's design. It's a miniscule reflection of who He is. For example, Jesus said: "If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!" (Luke 11:13). Our desire to give good gifts to our children is a *likeness* of God's desire to give good gifts to His children.

In today's verse, we read that we're not to withhold anything good to "those to whom it is due," especially when we have the ability to do so. The next verse even states: "Do not say to your neighbor, 'Go, and come again, tomorrow I will give it'—when you have it with you" (Pr. 3:28).

If God requires that of us, will He not also do so Himself? Will He require us to do the right thing while not doing the right thing Himself? The answer is obvious. Thus, since Jesus has obtained all God's favor, blessings, and promises through His righteous life and sacrificial death—it's all rightly due to Him—will the Father withhold anything from Him? In other words: when we come to the Father *in Jesus' name*, will He not bestow all the good that is due to His Son, especially since He has the power to do so? "Ask, and it will be given to you" (Matt. 7:7).

February 18

Come to Jesus

Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

Matthew 11:28

I don't recall where I read it, but one of the old divines has said that all the great philosophers wrote momentous works, but there's only One who has said: "Come to me . . . and I will give you rest." The endless pages of the world's great philosophers pale in comparison with His invitation and promised benefit.

This verse is even more amazing in light of what it implies. What are some of the burdens that we carry? While we can certainly think of numerous ones, what about the burden of sin or the burdens that doubt produces? Every Christian knows this by heart.

Nevertheless, Jesus invites us to come to Him and experience rest. Our sins and doubts are no deterrent for coming. Astoundingly, self-inflicted burdens pose no restraint to His invitation. *Whatever* it is, the mandate is clear: "Come to me . . . and I will give you rest." The sooner we do so, the better it is.

Here's solid hope for the backslider and the one who has neglected the means of grace. With His invitation, Jesus cleared the path to obtain deep rest for our soul. Is anything more priceless? Many would be willing to do or give anything for such internal rest. Yet, Jesus offers it freely.

Will you come to Him? Will you cast yourself upon Him? His promise is certain. Nothing can withstand His declaration: "I will give *you* rest." Not just for a few brief moments, but continually as we come to Him.

March 5

Perfect Peace

You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you, because he trusts in you.

Isaiah 26:3

Wouldn't it be great if you always had perfect peace? Who doesn't want that, right? The Hebrew word *Shalom* is used. It literally reads: "You keep him in *Shalom Shalom* . . ." That word can be translated as completeness, soundness, welfare, and peace.

As the word *peace* is repeated twice, even so the condition: "Whose mind is stayed on you, because he trusts in you." In order to experience perfect peace, your mind should fully lean on Jesus. It should entirely rest in Him and His finished work.

While you will only experience such uninterrupted peace in glory, you can certainly also experience it amidst the challenges and trials of life, especially when you trust that He works *all things* "together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose" (Rom. 8:28).

That doesn't mean you won't experience anxiety. However, part of leaning on Him is to cast "all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you" (1 Peter 5:7). Are you doing so? If so, you'll experience what Paul wrote: "And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 4:7).

The Hebrew word for *trust* means to run for refuge. When anything disturbs your peace, there's only one answer: flee to Jesus, pour out your heart before Him, and trust in His word. He won't fail you!

March 21

A Profound Mystery

This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church.

Ephesians 5:32

When God instituted marriage, He gave infinite meaning to that sacred union because it refers to Jesus and His bride. While Moses had most likely no clue of that significance, God revealed this profound mystery through Paul.

In a world governed by an infinitely-wise, perfectly-holy, and supremely-good God, it shouldn't surprise us that there's much more God-given meaning to things and events than we may understand or even realize.

Our goal should always be to conform our thoughts to God's word and not for God's word to conform to our thoughts. Humility and a heartfelt dependence are proper character traits when we engage with the difficulties and perplexities of life.

As Paul quoted from Genesis, he highlighted that "a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife." The correlation is obvious. Jesus left heaven's glory to pursue His wife and cling to her. His faithfulness toward her has been flawless and will be so throughout eternity.

The history of the church gives sufficient evidence that Jesus' bride hasn't always reciprocated such divine love. *That* makes His faithfulness all the more admirable. He is to be worshipped as our perfect Husband, leaving everything and eternally holding fast to us. That's quite a love story!

April 7

Daily

Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.

John 6:54

Jesus' righteous life and sacrificial death—who He is and what He has accomplished and obtained—is the very foundation upon which we are to live. *He* is our life! Such faith is illustrated by two of life's necessities—eating and drinking.

For example, how many times do you eat and drink during the day? That same necessity is true for our spiritual life. Being a Christian isn't about going to church, although that's a definite part of it. Rather, it's about daily living on Jesus—continuously receiving from Him. Just like I need to take time to eat and drink each day, even so do I need to take time to feed on and drink of Him.

Whenever I feel spiritually empty, the Holy Spirit often reminds me of a simple truth: have I fed on the very life of Christ and dwelt on the reality of His blood, both for the forgiveness of my sins and the New Covenant He inaugurated? Most of the time, that reminder gives me the reason why I feel spiritually lifeless.

If we don't have proper nutrition, our energy level drops, and we start feeling weak and grouchy. Many spiritual struggles can easily be prevented by drawing deep from "the wells of salvation" (Isa. 12:3). When we feast on Jesus, making Him our own, we discover His abundant life. While He's always the Benefactor and we're always the beneficiary, that doesn't mean we're passive. We should daily come to Him by faith and receive from His abundance.

April 22

On His Heart

So Aaron shall bear the names of the sons of Israel in the breastpiece of judgment on his heart, when he goes into the Holy Place, to bring them to regular remembrance before the LORD.

Exodus 28:29

The author of Hebrews wrote: “The law has but a shadow of the good things to come instead of the true form of these realities” (Heb. 10:1). While that may have been specifically stated in relation to the required sacrifices, it also relates to the whole law with all its ordinances: “They serve a copy and shadow of the heavenly things” (Heb. 8:5).

In that eight chapter of Hebrews, the author also wrote that Jesus has “obtained a ministry that is as much more excellent than the old as the covenant he mediates is better, since it is enacted on better promises” (Heb. 8:6). Everything about “the true form of these realities” is far better and greater than the shadows themselves.

As the High Priest, Aaron bore “the names of the sons of Israel in the breastpiece of judgment on his heart.” The twelve sons of Israel represented the whole nation. When Aaron would go into the Holy Place, he would “bring them to regular remembrance before the LORD.”

Our great High Priest—Jesus—also bears the names of His people on His heart. It’s not just twelve representatives, but each one individually. They are, so to speak, engraved on His heart. The love He has for them is beyond our comprehension. Furthermore, He doesn’t enter the Holy Place *regularly*; He’s there *permanently*. His priesthood is far more superior than Aaron’s ever was.

May 4

Increase and Decrease

He must increase, but I must decrease.

John 3:30

After about 400 silent years—the period between the last prophet in the Old Testament and the beginning of the New Testament—we have John the Baptist in the wilderness of Judea, preaching the kingdom of heaven.

That must have been quite a scene. Jesus referred to him as “more than a prophet” (Luke 7:26). His ministry was revolutionary. Yet, that didn’t give him a sense of self-importance. He referred to himself as unworthy to untie the strap of Jesus’ sandals.

When Jesus began His ministry, John would point to Him. He didn’t try to keep his disciples to himself, as though he had any rights to them. His mindset was that Jesus *must* increase and that he had to decrease.

Is that also your mindset? How do you view yourself? Our flesh—our inherent sinful nature—likes to have prominence. The religious leaders in Jesus’ day are a prime example. They desired to “have the best seats in the synagogues and the places of honor at feasts” (Mark 12:39).

Since human nature doesn’t change, this can also be true of us. The most sacrificial service can be fuel for our pride. I’ve heard Christians boast about their commitment to Jesus as though God’s enabling grace was a side issue.

In order for Jesus to increase in our lives, we have to cast away any sense of self-importance, as though He’s dependent on us. A sense of utter dependence on Him is a good way to start.

May 11

Without Blemish

Your lamb shall be without blemish.

Exodus 12:5

Since the first sin by Adam and Eve, God has proclaimed the gospel: “I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel” (Gen. 3:15).

His gospel proclamation included types, events, people, promises, shadows, offices, prophets, the Ten Commandments, and the sacrificial system. The sacrifices were probably the most explicit declaration of God’s good news regarding His Son. Even after Adam and Eve had sinned, the death of an animal is implied when He clothed them with “garments of skins” (Gen. 3:21). God’s message of salvation included substitutionary death and the shedding of blood.

When He was about to deliver His people from the afflictions of Egypt, He instructed them to take “a lamb for a household” (v. 3). The blood of the lamb had to be put on “the two doorposts and the lintel of the houses” in order to escape God’s judgement (v. 7). They had to take a lamb *without blemish*. No blemished lamb was acceptable. That’s an obvious reference to Jesus’ perfect righteous life. Only such a sinless life could atone for sin.

Paul referred to Jesus as the One “who knew no sin” (2 Cor. 5:21). The author of Hebrews described Him as “holy, innocent, unstained, separated from sinners, and exalted above the heavens” (Heb. 7:26). His blameless life, sacrificed for our sins, is our eternal redemption.

May 20

Jesus' Condescension

He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds.

Psalm 147:3

When I selected today's verse, I was struck by the next one: "He determines the number of the stars; he gives to all of them their names" (v. 4). Right next to each other is Jesus' condescension to heal the brokenhearted and bind up their wounds *and* His absolute power and sovereignty to create the stars and name them. Can there be a more striking contrast?

Whenever we consider His condescension to heal our broken heart and bind up our wounds, we have to do so in light of His sufferings and death. All God's blessing and benefits are wholly related to His sacrifice. Apart from His substitutionary death, there's no hope and relieve.

Thus, today's verse expresses both the essence of who He is and the fruit of what He has done—the sufferings He went through in order to make this verse a reality for us. He purposely endured unimaginable pain, was separated from His Father, and bore our sins, so that we would be able to experience this verse as a free gift. Amazing love!

Notice also that there's no qualification as to *why* we have a broken heart. While it can certainly be based on what has been done to us, many times it's what we've done to ourselves. Either way, it's part of living in a fallen world.

Whatever the reason, though: "He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds." Since the Bible doesn't qualify this blessing in any way, we must never do so ourselves. The beauty of the gospel is found in its ability to relieve any hurt and pain, whether now or in the world to come.

June 8

Triumphant

He will tread our iniquities underfoot.

Micah 7:19

Jesus has never suffered any defeat. That word isn't even listed in His dictionary; He cannot relate to it. Defeat is as foreign to Him as sinning. These words cannot co-exist with Him.

Even when He suffered and died, it was an astounding victory: "By cancelling 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" (Col. 2:14-15). Today's verse declares His triumph—the triumph of His grace.

Whenever we read the Bible, we must never limit its scope. "Our iniquities" mean "our iniquities." No matter how many or how severe, that's irrelevant. He will (has!) tread them all under His foot. Not one of them had the slightest ability to withstand Him.

Not only are our iniquities—not doing what is right—in relation to what we *shouldn't* do, but also to what we *should* do. When I think of it that way, I see Jesus walking this earth as our last Adam, fulfilling all God's righteous requirements on our behalf. With each step, He was treading our lack of doing what is right under His foot, gaining the victory on our behalf.

Even now, when your iniquities have overtaken you, there's incredible hope because Jesus has already tread them underfoot. When we trust in Him, we'll be the eternal participants in His triumph, even in our temporary defeat.

June 16

He Upholds Us

He upholds the universe by the word of his power.

Hebrews 1:3

This morning I was exhausted and overwhelmed with life. It was tempting to call in sick and spend the day in bed. As I pulled myself together and drove to work, my only prayer was for God's mercy, grace, and strength. As I pondered His word, I believe the Holy Spirit directed me to today's verse.

Not only did Jesus create everything, He also upholds everything by "the word of his power." The notion of a God who's far removed from His creation, letting things just play out, is utterly unbiblical. He's much more involved in everyday life than we can even begin to fathom.

Yesterday, we saw that creation is an incredible encouragement for our faith, slaying our doubts, fears, and anxieties. It highlights His ability to help us, no matter what. Today's verse adds to that encouragement—He's faithful to uphold what He has created.

At times, we may feel that our life is spinning out of control, having no grip on it. Jesus, however, upholds—keeps in place—the grace that He has worked within us. Were it not for His power and faithfulness, things would certainly fall apart.

Each day, creation testifies that He will help and uphold us. Peter expressed that as follows: "Who by God's power are being guarded [kept] through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials" (1 Peter. 1:5-6).

July 6

Joined Honor

Whoever does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent him.

John 5:23

The proper acknowledgment and respect to Jesus is vital. When we reject Him, we reject the Father. When we show disrespect to the Son, we show disrespect to the Father. They are one and the same—co-equal and co-eternal.

Jesus said: “If you had known me, you would have known my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him.” He also stated: “Whoever has seen me has seen the Father” (John 14:7, 9). His statements reveal the unity within the Godhead *and* that there are distinct persons.

Yesterday, we saw that the Father has given *all* judgment to Jesus. We also saw the reason for that decision: “That all may honor the Son, just as they honor the Father.” The Father wants everyone to honor Jesus in the same way He is honored—as sovereign God and righteous Judge.

When we consider the context in which Jesus was stating these things, we see that the Jewish leaders were seeking to kill Him. Why? Jesus had made Himself “equal with God” (John 5:18). He mentioned that if they were to reject Him, they would also reject the Father who had sent Him.

What we believe about Jesus and how we relate to Him is vitally important. There are many religions and sects that acknowledge Jesus with some measure of “respect,” but they actually reject Him. Unless you take Jesus for who He is—God—you dishonor and reject your Maker.

July 7

His Son

Concerning his Son.

Romans 1:3

Paul began his letter to the Romans with: “Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy Scriptures, concerning his Son.” The gospel is about God’s Son. When we add anything to Him, no matter how small, we pervert the Father’s good news. He’s entirely Son-centered and so should we.

In preaching on “the gospel of God” in his Romans series, Martyn Lloyd-Jones emphasized that even an appeal to be or do certain things isn’t good news and shouldn’t be presented as gospel truth. Rather, the gospel is entirely centered on Jesus, who He is and what He has accomplished, obtained, and promised to do.

The gospel isn’t about our pursuit of morality and doing the right things, including having a zeal for God (see Rom. 10:2). It’s about Jesus’ righteous life, sacrificial death, and glorious resurrection. It’s about the eternal fruit that He will gather from what He has sown. Isaiah stated: “When his soul makes an offering for guilt, he *shall* see his offspring” (Isa. 53:10).

The only thing we are to do is to embrace Jesus: “Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and you perish in the way, for his wrath is quickly kindled. Blessed are all who take refuge in him” (Ps. 2:12). In doing so, we embrace “the fountain of [all spiritual] life” (Ps. 36:9).

August 4

Clothed and Covered

I will greatly rejoice in the LORD; my soul shall exult in my God, for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation; he has covered me with the robe of righteousness.

Isaiah 61:10

God seeks our joy. To the Corinthian believers, Paul wrote: “Not that we lord it over your faith, but we work with you *for your joy*, for you stand firm in your faith” (2 Cor. 1:24). Notice how joy and faith are related. Peter expressed that same connection: “Though you do not now see him, you *believe* in him and *rejoice* with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory” (1 Peter 1:8). Our joy is grounded in our faith.

Today’s verse shows that our joy is related to what God has done: “For he has clothed me with the garments of salvation; he has covered me with the robe of righteousness.” The more we live in that truth—the reality of having been “justified in Christ”—the more joy we’ll experience.

In Dutch, there’s a proverb that states: De kleren maken de man (one’s clothes make the person). The impression of a suit is significantly greater than wearing old ragged clothes, even if a rich person wears them. The same is true with our spiritual clothes, even though *we* wear them.

No matter how much we may still struggle with sin and inward corruptions, God has clothed us with “the garments of salvation” and has covered us with “the robe of righteousness.” He has freely given us the very righteousness of His Son. Are you daily living in that reality? It’s the fountain of endless joy.

August 11

Live by Faith

I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

Galatians 2:20

While our “old self” has been crucified with Christ—a gospel reality—it’s still very much alive. Until we enter glory, our “old self” will seek dominance over our “new self.” Nevertheless, the Bible states that our “old self” isn’t a part of who we truly are.

Paul expressed that as follows: “For I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. Now if I do what I do not want, I agree with the law, that it is good. *So now it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me*” (Rom. 7:15-17). In every believer, there’s indwelling sin—remnants of our “old self.” In today’s verse, Paul referred to that as “the life I now live in the flesh.”

As we go through life as believers in Jesus, we quickly discover the *Two of Me*. For example, to the Galatian believers, Paul wrote: “For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do” (Gal. 5:17).

What’s the response to this constant struggle? Paul gave us the answer: “I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.” Jesus’ love for us far exceeds any living “in the flesh.” He freely gave Himself for all those indwelling sins. His love infinitely outweighs them.

August 26

The Test

Examine yourselves, to see whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Or do you not realize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you fail to meet the test!

2 Corinthians 13:5

Salvation is an eternity-determining reality. To say that it's a matter of life and death is quite an understatement. The author of Hebrews warns against any lightheartedness: "How shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation?" (Heb. 2:3).

Throughout the Bible, there are definite tests to determine the assurance of one's salvation. One of them is in Paul's first letter to the Corinthian believers: "Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, and by which you are being saved, *if you hold fast to the word I preached to you*—unless you believed in vain" (1 Cor. 15:1-2).

In his second letter, Paul urged the same believers to "examine yourselves, to see whether you are in the faith." He asked them to test themselves. What was it that they needed to find out? How did they know whether or not they passed the test?

The answer is clearly given: is Jesus Christ in you? If He is, you've passed the test. If He isn't, you've failed the test. John wrote the same: "Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life" (1 John 5:12).

Are you clinging to Jesus, holding fast to Him? If so, you are as safe as Jesus Himself. Faith isn't only an adherence to certain doctrinal beliefs; it's a living relationship with the Son of God.

September 4

Come!

Come, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and he who has no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.

Isaiah 55:1

This verse in Isaiah is one of the great gospel invitations in the Bible. Four times God calls us to come and find true satisfaction in His Son. He alone can satisfy the depths of our soul, regardless of our circumstances.

Jesus emphasized that when He said: “I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirsts” (John 6:35). Notice how He used *comes* and *believes* interchangeably.

Faith isn't just an agreement with certain truths, even though that's part of it. Rather, it's a continual coming to Jesus and embracing Him for who He is and what He has accomplished, obtained, and promised to do. It's a personal, deeply-satisfying relationship with God's Son.

The Bible uses illustrations in order to address spiritual realities. Just like our physical body craves continual satisfaction, even so our soul. While we can “believe” that food will satisfy our physical cravings, it won't do so unless we actually eat. The same is true spiritually.

We can believe that Jesus satisfies without being satisfied. If that's the case, there's only one four-fold answer: come! No matter who you are, Jesus' words are plain: “Whoever comes to me I will never cast out” (John 6:37). Ultimately, the victory over sin is to find our satisfaction in Jesus. When we're satisfied with Him, we have little desire for other “pleasures.”

September 15

Forgetfulness

For whoever lacks these qualities is so nearsighted that he is blind, having forgotten that he was cleansed from his former sins.

2 Peter 1:9

The Christian life isn't static. We're either moving closer to Christ or drifting away from Him. Charles Spurgeon compared it to a slippery slope. When we stop reaching for the top, we start sliding down. Paul wrote: "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling" (Phil. 2:12).

Peter had just exhorted believers to supplement seven qualities to their faith, making every effort to do so. They are: virtue, knowledge, self-control, steadfastness, godliness, brotherly affection, and love. He then wrote: "For whoever lacks these qualities is so nearsighted that he is blind, having forgotten that he was cleansed from his former sins."

I find it intriguing that he associated a lack of these qualities with, "having forgotten that he was cleansed from his former sins." Do we as Christians deeply realize from what we've been saved? Do we know the just wrath we deserve for every sin we've committed? Or do we take God's salvation as "normal"?

We've been fully forgiven from all our past, current, and even future sins. We're set free: "There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 8:1). However, the reality of our sins and just condemnation should never be forgotten, as Peter indicated as a possibility. We do well to constantly meditate on the sobering realities of sin, guilt, wrath, and salvation, including our own. That's far more relevant than anything else in this world.

September 21

Blameless

Now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy.

Jude 1:24

The gospel is far better news than we can fathom. Charles Spurgeon said that believers always live below their means—below the reality of what God has accomplished through His Son. The truth of the gospel is so stunning that our tiny minds cannot wholly comprehend it. The essence of God's good news is that Jesus will present us *blameless* before the Father. Isn't that astonishing?

Recently, my pastor preached on the two different principles in life: the principle of performance and grace. He mentioned that we, as Christians, many times have one foot in each. The gospel demands that we wholly bank on the principle of grace, which is far more adequate to work genuine holiness within us than any performance-based mindset.

When we solely live within the sphere of God's grace, we realize that the person and work of His Son is all-sufficient to do what the Father has intended. It's no wonder, then—although it's the greatest wonder in the universe—that He will be able to present us blameless before the Father. His finished work will be so all-consuming for God's people that nothing else matters.

Our blamelessness is grounded in His righteous life and sacrificial death. Is there any blemish in His righteousness? When He glorifies us, we'll experience the full effect of what He has accomplished and obtained for His people.

October 13

The Spirit of God

The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me to bring good news to the poor; he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound.

Isaiah 61:1

The centrality of Jesus Christ is never set up against the triunity of the Godhead. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are entirely involved in our salvation. Jesus' earthly ministry was directed and fulfilled through the fullness of the Holy Spirit: "For he whom God has sent utters the words of God, for he gives the Spirit without measure" (John 3:34).

When He started His ministry, Jesus quoted this prophecy from Isaiah: "And the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written, 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me'" (Luke 4:17-18).

Jesus lived and ministered through the power of the Holy Spirit: "But if it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you" (Matt. 12:28). God's Spirit was (and is!) essential in the reality and manifestation of God's kingdom. The Father anointed His Son with His Spirit in order to establish His Kingdom.

Even now, as Christians, we need God's Spirit to apply the benefits of Jesus' finished work. He's the One who gives us the understanding of what Jesus has accomplished and how we are the eternal beneficiaries: "Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God" (1 Cor. 2:12).

October 17

Jesus Christ and Him Crucified

For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.

1 Corinthians 2:2

Of all Paul's letters to churches, the church in Corinth had some of the worst issues. There was disunity among believers, sexual sin that unbelievers didn't even tolerate, jealousy about spiritual gifts, pride, doctrinal issues, etc.

While Paul certainly didn't shove anything under the rug—he addressed all their sins and strongly exhorted them—there was an overarching reality that fueled his letter: “Jesus Christ and him crucified.” In the face of all their sins, the truth of the gospel was far greater.

Often, our pointing out the sins of other believers is fueled by self-righteousness, as though we're better. Instead of an attitude of brokenness, we have a prideful assertiveness that manifests itself in our response to the sins of others.

When Paul wrote that he didn't want to know anything, “except Jesus Christ and him crucified,” what did he mean? It obviously didn't mean that he tolerated their sins. He didn't cover them up with, “God loves you anyway,” or, “you are under grace.”

Rather, he confronted them with the truth of the gospel, which we daily need. In the face of many sins, he knew that “Jesus Christ and him crucified” was the only answer for forgiveness *and* holiness. The gospel is God's wisdom and power to justify *and* sanctify His people. There's no other answer and cure for sin.

October 26

Him We Proclaim

Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ.

Colossians 1:28

One of the most sobering realities within the church of Jesus Christ is that believers can be so caught up with anything but Jesus, including morality and conservatism. To the church of Laodicea, Jesus wrote: “For you say, I am rich, I have prospered, and I need nothing.” Yet, these Christians didn’t realize that they were “wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked” (Rev. 3:17).

The missing Person in their church was Jesus: “Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me” (Rev. 3:20). These believers didn’t have any true intimacy with Jesus. Could it be that many churches in the western world have some of the same characteristics? There’s much activity and prosperity, but seemingly little intimacy with Jesus.

What has that to do with today’s verse? Paul had a narrow-minded approach to ministry. To the Corinthians, he wrote: “For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified” (1 Cor. 2:2). To the Colossian believers, he stated: “*Him* we proclaim.”

What does it mean to proclaim Christ? Isn’t that an irrelevant question? Every Christian knows what that means, right? It’s fair to say that the Christians in Laodicea weren’t proclaiming Him as they should have. What about us? Let’s ponder that question tomorrow.

November 5

The Prerequisite

Now Sarai was barren; she had no child.

Genesis 11:30

The beauty and power of the gospel is manifested in our inabilities. God had chosen Abram as the father of all believers through whom He would bless the world: “In you all the families of the earth shall be blessed” (Gen. 12:3).

There was only one problem: Sarai was barren. Humanly speaking, she couldn’t have any children. How, then, would God be able to fulfill His gospel promise? Could He not have arranged that Abram would have married someone who wasn’t barren? That would simplify things, right?

As Abram had received God’s promise and was confronted with Sarai’s barrenness, he gave in to human invention. He took Sarai’s servant and went in to her, obtaining a son. Case closed, right? Not at all!

God rejected Ishmael as the one through whom He would fulfill His gospel promise. Instead, He performed something miraculous that no human being could’ve brought about—Sarai conceived and bore Isaac. He was the child of promise (see Gal. 4:28). It was through Isaac that God would fulfill the promise of His Son.

Our “barrenness” exists for the display of God’s gospel—for its beauty and power. That’s why I often quote what Jesus said: “Apart from me you can do nothing” (John 15:5). Our “nothingness” is not an obstacle to the gospel; rather, it’s a prerequisite. In the end, God rejected Abram’s pragmatic solution and only accepted and blessed His own supernatural work.

November 16

All Our Works

O LORD, you will ordain peace for us, for you have indeed done for us all our works.

Isaiah 26:12

What is your personality type? Mine has a definite melancholy part to it, not sure its percentage, though. The reason I bring this up is because it amazes me how the Holy Spirit can just give a glimpse of Jesus and everything changes from gloom to glory.

We see those same kinds of glimpses throughout the Old Testament. Sometimes, out of the blue, there's a glorious light that shatters all the dark circumstances of that particular period in time. I can picture the Father, being so excited about His Son, not being able to contain Himself at times, humanly speaking, of course. Today's verse is such a powerful gospel light. It contains the fullness of God's good news.

What's the ground of our peace with God? Isaiah gave us the answer: "For you have indeed done for us all our works." The only way to have peace with God is to have a perfect righteous life. Anything less incurs His holy wrath. Not because He's a mean God—far from it—but because He's perfectly holy and is "of purer eyes than to see evil and cannot look at wrong" (Hab. 1:13).

Jesus came in order to live such a life on our behalf. He performed all the required works of God's law. He fulfilled every iota and dot. When we embrace Him by faith, trusting that He has done "all our works," we have everlasting peace with God: "Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God *through our Lord Jesus Christ*" (Rom. 5:1).

November 18

Phenomenal News

For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth, and the former things shall not be remembered or come into mind.

Isaiah 65:17

The Bible communicates on a level that we can understand. It uses metaphors, similes, parables, and a whole lot more. Yet, there are realities in the unseen world that cannot be communicated: “What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love him” (1 Cor. 2:9).

Years ago, someone illustrated this as follows: what if you could communicate with an unborn child? You could try to explain green grass but he or she would be clueless. The same is true with the unseen world and the world to come.

Nevertheless, God has given us incredible, solid hope that’s wholly based on the nature of who He is—trustworthy. Paul referred to that as, “the hope laid up for you in heaven” (Col. 1:5). There are endless treasures of grace awaiting God’s people.

A significant part of our faith is living in the reality of that hope: “For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience” (Rom. 8:24-25).

Are you constantly looking forward to that hope? Imagine someone who’s about to go bankrupt, but has the sure promise of a bailout by a wealthy and trustworthy friend? Which of the two realities will determine his emotional makeup? What about us?

December 1

The Greatest Argument

He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?

Romans 8:32

Today's verse is one of the best and greatest arguments in the Bible. If God "did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, *how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?*" If He did the greater—giving Jesus to suffer the punishment that we deserve—will He not also do the lesser—freely give us all things? What are the "all things"?

It refers to the Father's favor, blessings, and promises. As the Son of Man, living a righteous life on our behalf, He rightfully obtained all favor, blessings, and promises. If the Father graciously punished His Son on our behalf, even before we were born, will He not also freely give us *everything* He's entitled to?

Paul expressed that to the Corinthians as follows: "So let no one boast in men. For all things are yours, whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or the present or the future—all are yours." He then gave the reason: "And you are Christ's, and Christ is God's" (1 Cor. 3:21-23). Since we belong to Christ and Christ belongs to God, we have everything that belongs to God, freely and fully.

The poorest believer in a third-world country is far wealthier than all the unbelieving billionaires in the world. Did you read that even *death* belongs to you? Since Jesus has conquered death, it's simply His (and our) servant to usher us into untold bliss.

December 19

The Virgin Birth

Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.

Isaiah 7:14

As we enter the week before Christmas Day, we want to focus on some of the Christmas verses in the Bible. While there are certain non-essentials over which we can graciously disagree, there are some definite essentials that determine whether or not one truly adheres to the Christian faith. One of those essentials is Jesus' virgin birth.

Unless we believe that He was born of a virgin, Mary, we fall outside Christian orthodoxy. While the word orthodoxy may seem antiquated, it refers to the essentials of the Christian faith, of which all Christians should heartily agree with.

About 700 years before Jesus' birth, God promised a sign: "Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son." Obviously, a virgin birth is humanly impossible; it's supernatural. The angel Gabriel explained it to Mary with these words: "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God" (Luke 1:35).

God also foretold the nature of Mary's son: "And shall call his name Immanuel." That name means "God with us" (Matt. 1:23). Jesus is God in the flesh—in a human body. He's both the Son of God and the Son of Man—a unique birth and a unique Person.

December 28

The Hope of Righteousness

For through the Spirit, by faith, we ourselves eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness.

Galatians 5:5

The Christian life is to be characterized by an unwavering hope in God's promises—a hope that's able to pull us through no matter what. Addressing our eternal glorification, Paul wrote: "For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience" (Rom. 8:24-25).

As believers in Jesus, we've been saved from the *penalty* of sin because Jesus died for each one of our sins. We've also been saved from the *power* of sin, having been born again through His Holy Spirit, which includes a new nature. The final deliverance—our glorification—will be our salvation from the very *presence* of sin, both internally and externally.

Each Christian knows and feels the sinful corruptions in his flesh—in his old, sinful nature. That is a daily reality. Paul expressed that as follows: "For I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate." He referred to that struggle as "sin that dwells within me." (Rom. 7:15, 17). Indwelling sin will be an everyday reality until we step into eternity.

Nevertheless, there's a far greater reality—the hope of righteousness. We can already rejoice in what *will* be. Through the Holy Spirit, by faith, we are waiting for the eternal deliverance from all indwelling sin. Amazingly, that hope has a purifying effect on our hearts: "And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure" (1 John 3:3). God wants us to daily live in the certainty of that hope, which easily outweighs all indwelling sin.

CONCLUSION

I hope you've been blessed and encouraged by these 31 preview devotionals. As believers, we're called to "hold fast to the word I preached to you"—hold fast to the gospel (1 Cor. 15:1-2). Jesus told His disciples to continually *eat* and *drink* of who He is and what He has accomplished, obtained, and promised to do (see John 6:53-56).

It's All about Jesus: The Bible's Grand Testimony has been written in order to encourage you in your faith and walk with Jesus. This one-year devotional will be released on Christmas Day for \$9.99, but you can preorder it as of October 1st for only \$5.00.

As I mentioned at the beginning of this book, it will be used as "a collective birthday gift for Jesus," raising funds for 100 reputable ministries. You can share this link on your social media: www.thecauseofchrist.com/jesus-birthday-gift

If you've been blessed and encouraged by these 31 preview devotionals, will you email me a review of this book? Your review will be listed at: www.thecauseofchrist.com/endorsements-for-its-all-about-jesus You can email your review at jan@thecauseofchrist.com

About the Author

I love to write devotionals—taking a Bible verse and diving into its truth and application, especially how it relates to and testifies of Jesus.

I was born and raised in the Netherlands. Jan is the Dutch equivalent of John and is pronounced “yawn.” When I was 19, I entered the U.S. for the first time and volunteered at Times Square Church, working on the Raven Truck and at The Upper Room, reaching out to the homeless. I did that for one year.

When I returned home, I started my external undergraduate degree program with Global University (at that time known as ICI University), while working at the Salvation Army at a homeless shelter in Rotterdam. In 2001, I had the opportunity to pursue my graduate degree program on a work scholarship in Florida. I taught at a Christian academy and a seminary for six years.

In 2007, I married Rachel and we have two children—Hannah and Isaiah. We reside in the Daytona Beach area and attend Christ Community Church. I invite you to check out my author’s website at www.devotionalwriter.com

Other Books by the Author

You can purchase these books on Amazon: www.amazon.com/author/janblonk (75% royalty goes to the spread of the gospel through reputable ministries – www.thecauseofchrist.com).

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A Glorious Sacrifice: Seeing and Savoring God's Matchless Love

Battling Sexual Temptations and Sins: Overcoming through God's Word and Spirit

Joy to the World: Christmas throughout the Year

The Glory of Christ: Discovering Ultimate Meaning – Finding True Fulfillment

A Christ-Centered Identity: Discovering Your God-Given Identity in His Son

In Christ Alone: What Every Christian Needs to Know More Deeply and Experience More Profoundly

Meeting God at Wits' End: Hope for the Weary

Jesus' Conclusive Victory: A Daily Reminder That He Erased Our Sins and Is Our Spotless Righteousness

God's Triumphant Mercy: A Reflection of Psalm 51

Why Good Things Happen to Bad People: A Fallen World and a Faithful Promise