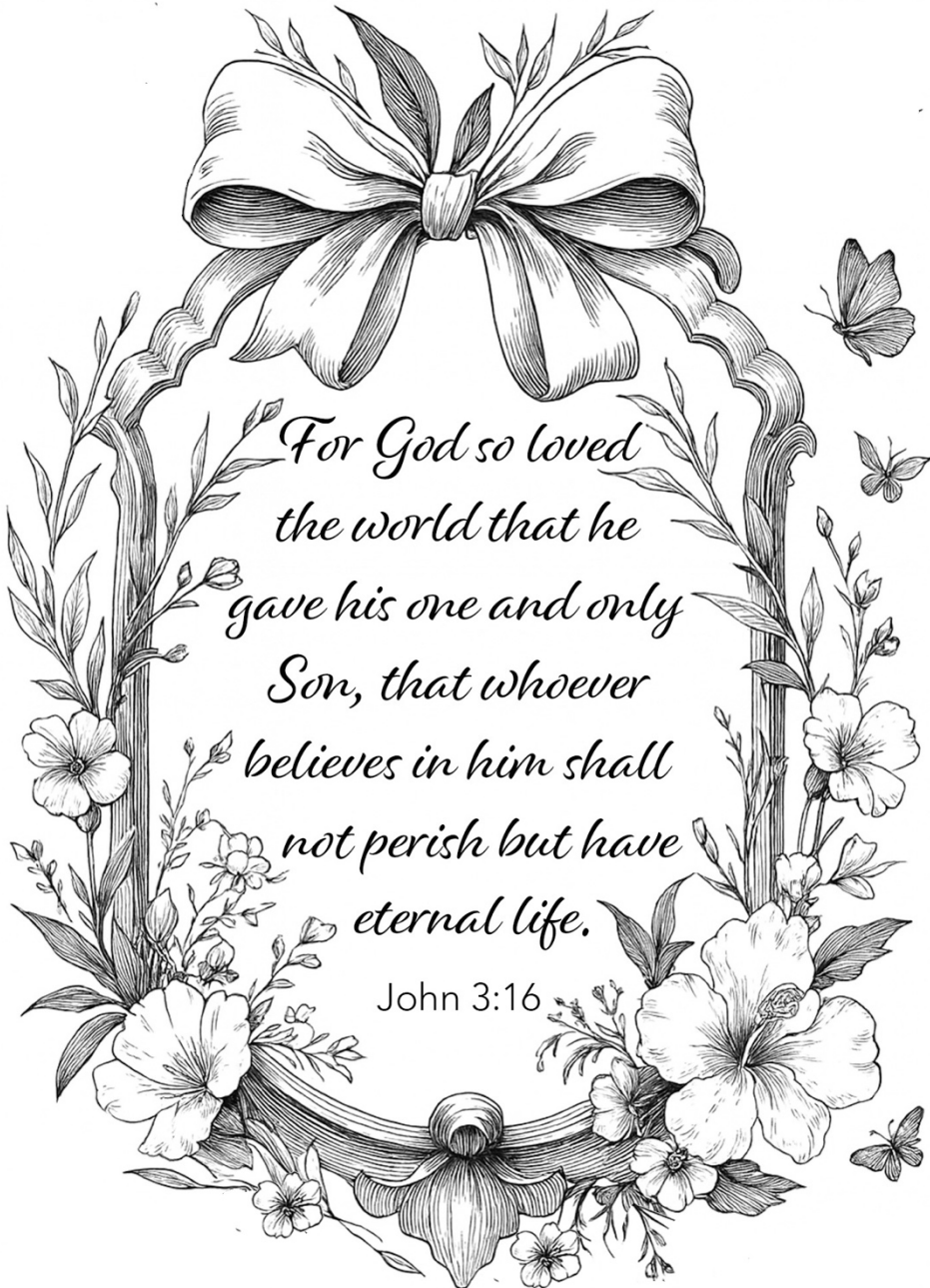


Unwrapping
the
Sacrificial Love
of God





*For God so loved
the world that he
gave his one and only
Son, that whoever
believes in him shall
not perish but have
eternal life.*

John 3:16

Love That Gave His Son



Suggested Reading: Genesis 22:1-14

In this powerful account, Abraham’s willingness to offer Isaac points us to the heart of the gospel—God’s own willingness to give His Son. As you read, notice the parallels: a beloved son, a journey of obedience, and a substitute provided by God Himself. The story that began on Mount Moriah was fulfilled on Calvary.

Optional Reading: Romans 8:31-32

Paul echoes that same truth when he writes, “He who did not spare His own Son, but gave Him up for us all...” As you read, remember that the gift God gave was complete and final. The Lamb provided on the mountain was always pointing to Jesus, the perfect sacrifice for our sin.



There was nothing fancy about Grampa's cabin—just a quiet little place with walls in need of fresh paint, mismatched chairs, and a wood stove that sat in the corner—but oh, how I loved it.

Something about being near the water on a warm summer day brings a calm that settles deep in your soul. It's the kind of peace that makes you slow down, breathe a little deeper, and remember what matters most.

But winter at the cabin? That was another story altogether.

Mornings were so cold it felt like pins and needles on your face. And the real test of love? Getting out of bed to start the fire.

Every morning, I'd pull up the covers, wondering who was brave enough to make the first move. The floors were bitter cold. The wood stove was in the other room. And the wind howled outside like it had something to prove.

But my husband? He didn't wait to be served. Bare feet on cold floors, feeding logs into the fire—love bending low, a quiet sacrifice in motion.

It's funny how simple acts of love can preach the loudest sermons, isn't it? I didn't need words to know that I was loved; I could feel it in the air, I could smell it in the fire.

Charles Spurgeon once said, "Men who love much will give much, and you may usually measure the truth of love by its self-denials and sacrifices... Little love forgets to bring water for the feet, but great love breaks its box of alabaster and lavishes its precious ointment."



But let's be clear. The love that we see in each other is merely a glimpse—a sliver, perhaps—of the sacrificial love of God. A love that stepped into our cold, broken world to give the incomparable gift of His Son.

Isaiah 9:6 says, “For to us a child is born, to us a son is given...” That's not a metaphor or a figure of speech. That's truth. A Son was given—not loaned, not shared temporarily—but given in full, by an all-knowing God.

Let that sink in for a minute...

- Knowing He would leave the glory of heaven for the dust of this earth.
- Knowing He would be born into poverty, not privilege.
- Knowing His own creation would not recognize Him.
- Knowing He would be misunderstood, mocked, and betrayed by those He loved.
- Knowing He would be whipped, beaten, and crowned with thorns.
- Knowing He would carry the weight of our sin upon His shoulders.

That kind of love should cause us to pause—mid-decorating, mid-planning, mid-worry and remember it’s not the lights or the carols or the warm memories—though all of those are lovely—the heart of it all is that we are loved with a love that gives first.

This is the beauty of Christmas. This is the gift.

❓ As you read Genesis 22:1-14 and Romans 8:31-32, how does remembering God’s willingness to give His Son deepen your understanding of the love we celebrate at Christmas?

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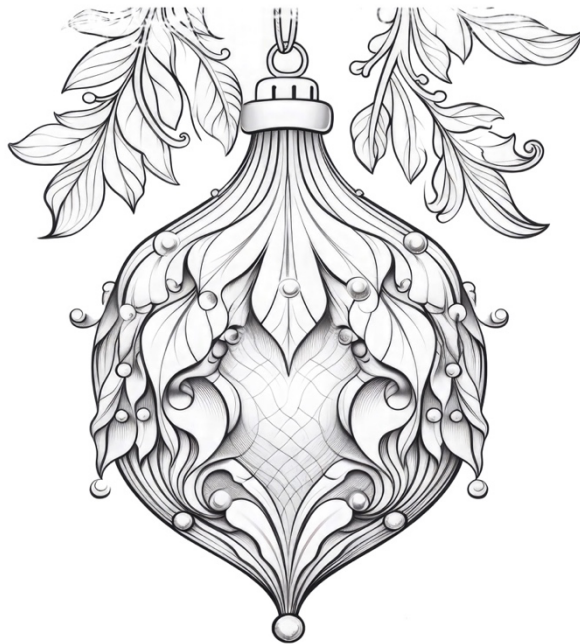
Wise Men Still Seek Him

The gift of Jesus means that God didn’t merely send us a message—He came Himself. The Giver became the Gift.

– Timothy Keller

Unwrapping the Gift

Look for one quiet way to love like Christ this week—something that costs you time, comfort, or convenience. Maybe it's doing something unseen—forgiving someone who's hard to love, or offering help without being asked. Let your love bend low in service, just as His love reached down to you.





*But
he was pierced
for our transgressions,
he was crushed for
our iniquities;
the punishment that
brought us peace was
on him, and by
his wounds we
are healed.*

Isaiah 53:5

Love That Bore Our Gings



Suggested Reading: Isaiah 53:1-12

This chapter paints a vivid picture of the suffering Servant who would carry our sin and bear our sorrows. As you read, pause at each phrase—pierced, crushed, wounded, punished—and remember that this love was for you.

Optional Reading: 1 Peter 2:21-25

As you read this scripture, notice how personally Peter applies these truths. Jesus didn't just suffer for the world in general; He suffered for you. Reflect on what it means that the same Savior who carried your sin also carries your sorrows, offering healing, forgiveness, and peace that endures.



I was browsing through some old family photos one day when I came across a snapshot of my dad. He was about fifteen at the time, wearing a cowboy hat with a bit of a smirk on his face—the kind that said, “I know I’m looking good.” But what stopped me in my tracks was the resemblance. It was uncanny. Sixty years apart, and yet he looked so much like my son that they could have passed for twins. Same eyes, same jawline, same feisty spark. It was one of those moments when past seemed to meld with the present.

The similarity between the two was unmistakable, but even more so is the one revealed in Isaiah 53. The chapter paints a portrait of the Savior so precise, so vivid, it’s as if Isaiah were standing at the cross. Every word—pierced, crushed, punished, wounded—points us to the cost of our peace. This wasn’t guesswork. It was prophecy. Before shepherds ever knelt beside the manger, Isaiah had already spoken of the Lamb who would be led to the slaughter. The manger was the doorway to the mission of redemption.

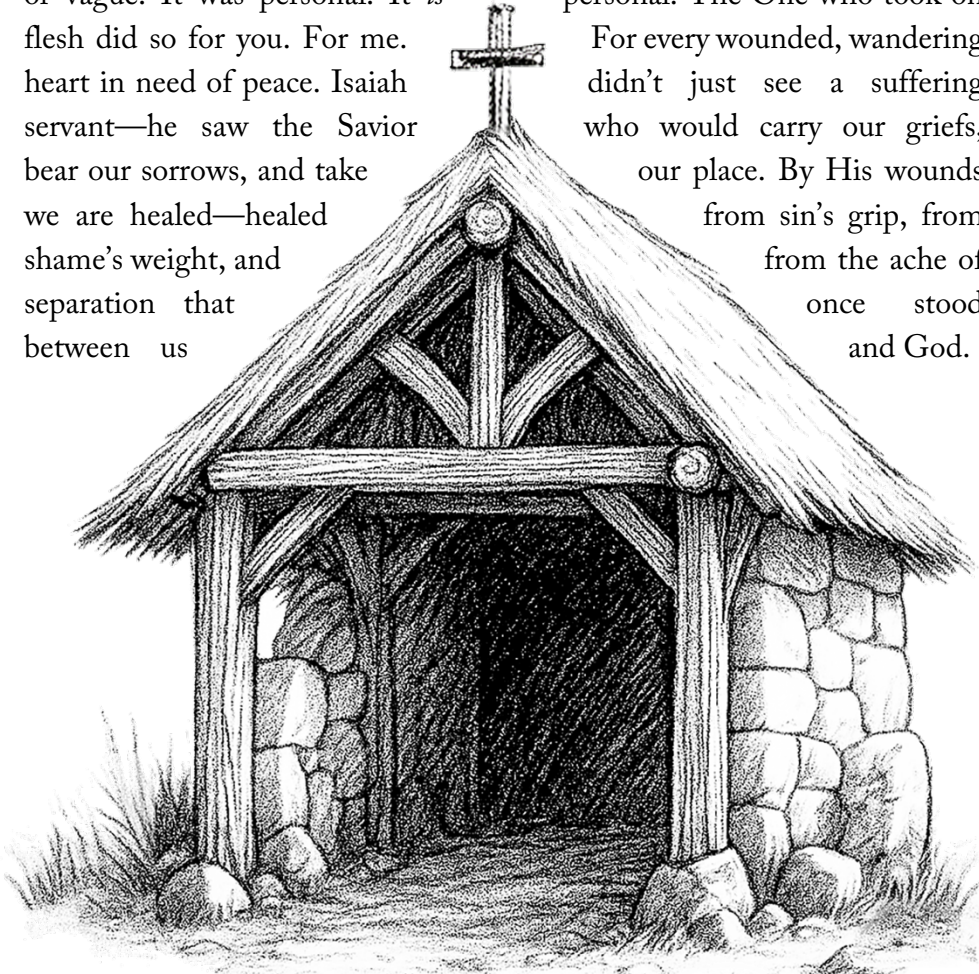
Christmas—so much more than just a quiet night in Bethlehem—was the beginning of a love story written in blood and grace. We sing about peace on earth—the peace that Jesus came to bring—but peace like that doesn’t come cheap. The peace they sang about was peace purchased by His blood. It came through the suffering of the Servant, foretold centuries before:

But he was pierced for our transgressions,
he was crushed for our iniquities; the
punishment that brought us peace was
on him, and by his wounds we are healed.

-Isaiah 53:5

Think about that. The cry that filled the Bethlehem night—the sound of a newborn taking His first breath—would one day echo from Calvary’s hill, as Jesus took His last. The hands that reached for Mary’s face would bear the scars of nails. From cradle to cross, it was all part of the same rescue mission.

And here’s the heart of it all: this love wasn’t distant. It wasn’t general or vague. It was personal. It *is* personal. The One who took on flesh did so for you. For me. For every wounded, wandering heart in need of peace. Isaiah didn’t just see a suffering servant—he saw the Savior who would carry our griefs, bear our sorrows, and take our place. By His wounds we are healed—healed from sin’s grip, from shame’s weight, and from the ache of once stood and separation that between us and God.



❓ When you think about the words *“By His wounds we are healed,”* what area of your life comes to mind—where you need His healing, forgiveness, or peace today?

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And if you're weary right now—worn down by anxiety, disappointment, or the ache of unanswered prayers—His love meets you here. Not when you've figured everything out. Not when you're strong again—but right in the middle of your mess. Jesus didn't come for the polished and put-together. He came for the hurting, the heavy-hearted, the sinner in need of grace. The same Savior who bled for you still beckons you now with open arms.

From the womb that bore the Christ child...

To the cross that bore our sin...

God's love was steadfast and still is today.

The manger cradled more than just an infant—it held the fullness of God’s love. A bleeding love. A love so wide, it reached into our brokenness to give us life.

Christmas reminds us that salvation began in a stable—but was secured on a cross. Every sin He bore had a name. And yours was among them. And so my friend, remember this: the peace you long for, the healing you need, the forgiveness you crave—it’s all wrapped up in His unfailing love. Bring it to the cross, and lay it at His feet.

This is the beauty of Christmas. This is the gift.



Wise Men Still Seek Him

It was not the nails that held Him to the cross, but His love for you and me.

—Billy Graham

Unwrapping the Gift

Reach out to someone who's been hard to love—maybe a family member, friend, or coworker—and offer them grace this week. Remember that the love which bore your sins calls you to bear with others in patience and forgiveness.

❓ What burden, longing, or hurt are you bringing to the cross this Christmas? How does knowing the depth of His love bring you comfort and peace?

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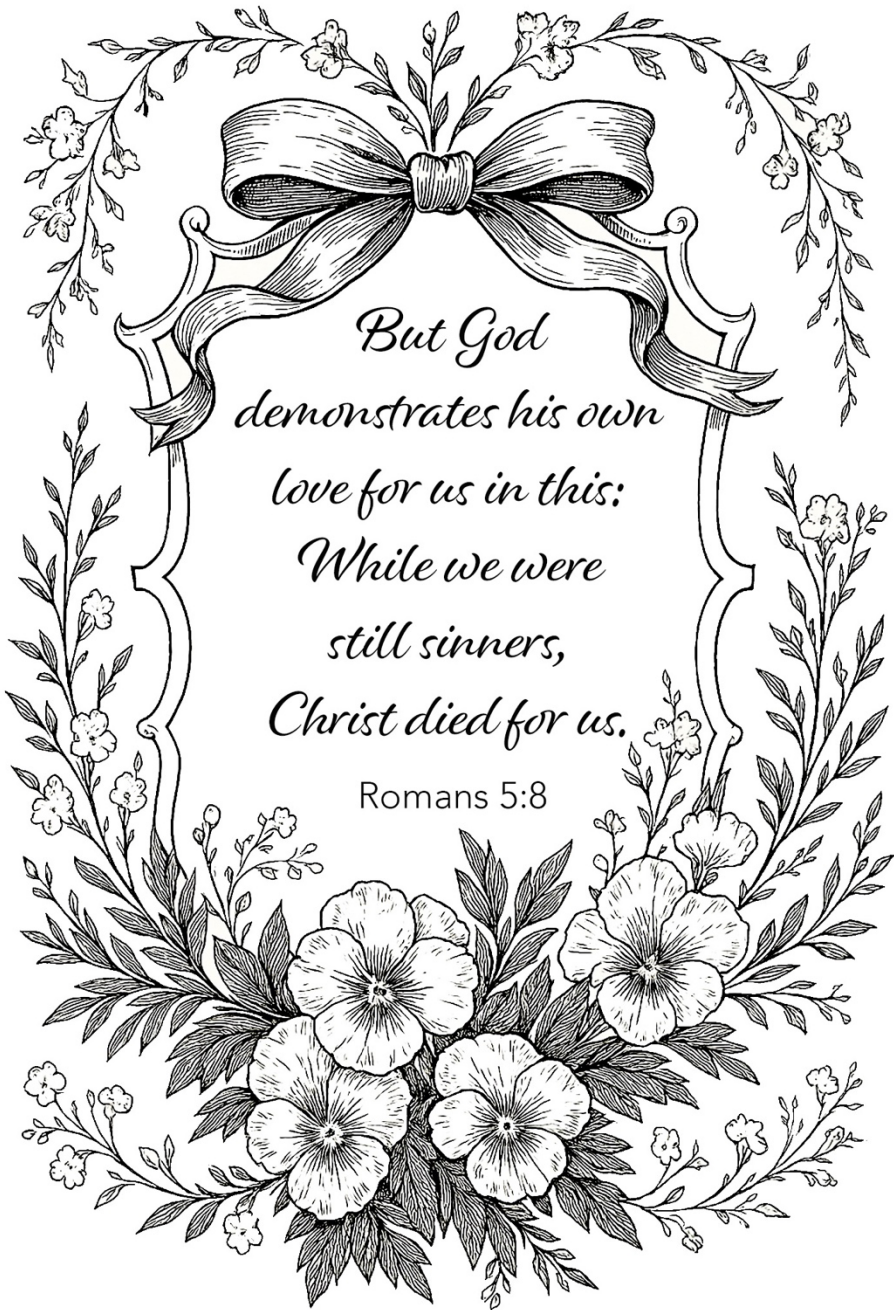
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*But God
demonstrates his own
love for us in this:
While we were
still sinners,
Christ died for us.*

Romans 5:8

Love That Reached Out First



Suggested Reading: 1 John 4:7-21

John reminds us that “we love because He first loved us.” These verses unpack what divine love looks like in action—honest, sacrificial, and transforming. As you read, notice how God’s love flows through us to others. Going first in love isn’t about fairness—it’s about faithfulness. It’s choosing to reflect the heart of the One who reached out to us before we ever reached for Him.

Optional Reading: Luke 19:1-10

The story of Zacchaeus shows Jesus reaching out to the undeserving. Before Zacchaeus ever changed, Jesus called his name and entered his home. This is love in action—grace that moves toward sinners, not away. As you read, consider what it might look like to reach out first in your own life this Christmas.



Isn't it funny how stubborn the heart can be some days? We know better than to wallow in our pity, but we do it anyway. One afternoon, Michael and I found ourselves at odds—not anything big, just enough to ruffle feathers and send him to the basement. Silence spoke louder than words, and neither one of us was willing to budge.

Slipping onto the sofa beside me, Madison warmly and wisely chimed in, “Mom, shouldn’t you go downstairs and talk to him?”

Oof. That hit hard. It wasn’t just her words—it was the gentle truth tucked inside them. She was calling me to something higher, something better. And I knew it.

I didn’t feel like making peace. I didn’t feel like being kind. But love? It doesn’t wait for feelings to catch up. It moves first. And sometimes? It starts with a quiet nudge we didn’t want but needed.

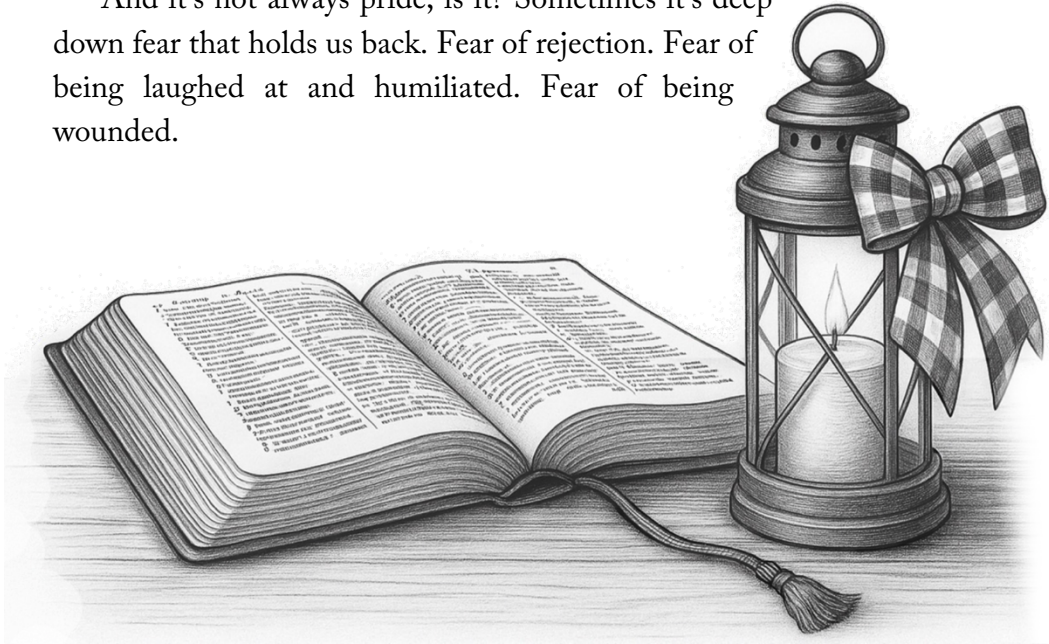
The longer we sit in silence, the harder it is to reach across that divide. Someone has to go first—and that someone is often us. Reaching out doesn’t mean we’re giving in; it means we’re giving God room to work.

When we take the first step toward peace, we mirror His heart. Every act of humility, every word of kindness, every small attempt to make things right reflects the One who reached out to us first.

Her call to action was more than good advice—it was a reflection of the gospel. A gospel that teaches me to love first—even when it’s hard, even when it costs me something. A gospel that reminds me to lay down my

pride and extend grace before it's ever earned. A gospel that calls me to reach out to others.

And it's not always pride, is it? Sometimes it's deep down fear that holds us back. Fear of rejection. Fear of being laughed at and humiliated. Fear of being wounded.



I wonder sometimes if Jesus felt that way too—a man of sorrows, despised and rejected by men. And yet, He didn't pull back. He didn't shut down. Knowing full well what it would cost, He still reached out. He chose to love.

Opening my Bible, I see it so clearly:

But God demonstrates his own love for us
in this: While we were still sinners,
Christ died for us.

-Romans 5:8

He loved first.

He reached out while I was still stubborn, still selfish, still tangled up in my own mess. And honestly? I needed to see that.

Maybe it means we go first. Not because it's fair. Not because they've earned it.

But because He loved us first.

- Maybe it's apologizing before the other person brings it up.
- Maybe it's choosing kindness toward someone who's been anything but kind.
- Maybe it's doing the chore no one else notices, just to make someone's day a little easier.
- Maybe it's reaching out to the friend who pulled away—and loving them anyway.
- Maybe it's forgiving quietly, even if they never say they're sorry.
- Maybe it's letting go of an offense you've been holding onto for too long.
- Maybe it's bringing a Christmas gift or handwritten note to someone you've struggled with in the past.
- Maybe it's offering help when you're tired, simply because you can.
- Maybe it's praying for the one who hurt you—really praying, not just out of duty, but out of love.

Wise Men Still Seek Him

Grace, like water, flows to the lowest part. God always moves first—stooping down to lift those who can't lift themselves.

—Phillip Yancey



? Can you think of a situation where God is prompting you to “go first”—to forgive, to reach out, or to show kindness even when it feels undeserved?

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This kind of love isn't easy. But it's powerful.

It breaks cycles.

It opens hearts.

It reminds us—and them—of the love that reached us first.

Christmas points us to that love. A love that initiates. A love that draws near. A love that gives even when it costs everything.

When I choose to forgive first... when I extend kindness to someone who doesn't deserve it... when I lay down pride and walk in humility—I'm going back to the heart of Christmas—bringing peace to my home, to my relationships, and to the posture of my heart.

This is the beauty of Christmas. This is the gift.

Unwrapping the Gift

Think of one relationship where love has grown quiet or distant. Do one small act today that bridges that gap—a text, a prayer, a word of kindness, or a step toward reconciliation.

Don't wait for the other person to move first. Let your love lead the way, just as His did for you.

❓ At Christmas, we celebrate the God who loved first. How might remembering His love for you change the way you respond to others this season?

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*Greater love has
no one than this:
to lay down
one's life for
one's friends.*

John 15:13

Love That Gave His Life



Suggested Reading: John 13:1-17

This passage captures the moment when Jesus washed His disciples' feet—a living picture of love that serves and sacrifices. As you read, keep this in mind: He knew one would betray Him, another would deny Him, and yet He chose humility.

Each act, each word, points to a Savior who lays Himself down for His friends.

Optional Reading: 1 John 3:16-18

John reminds us that “this is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us.” True love isn’t just a feeling—it’s action. As you read, notice how John ties belief and obedience together, urging us to love “not with words or speech but with actions and in truth.” Let these verses remind you that every quiet sacrifice, every unseen act of kindness, is a reflection of Christ’s love living through you.



The other day, Maddy went downstairs to hunt through boxes for an old set of dishes that we had. You know—the classic brown and white china every grandma owned? The kind reserved for special days like Christmas? That’s the set. She’s been working hard to make her house a home, stretching every dollar just to do it. But when she came back up, her hands were empty.

“I couldn’t find the dishes,” she said, “but that wooden Santa bust is sweet!”

I knew the one she meant right away. I bought it last Christmas on a whim—a cheerful little Santa with a red cap tilted just right and a twinkle in his eye that made me smile every time I walked by.

“You can have it,” I told her.

“Really? Don’t you like it?” she asked, surprised that she could have it.

Truth is, I loved it.

It was one of those Hobby Lobby finds you can’t just walk past. You tell yourself you’re only there for wrapping paper, but somehow it ends up in your cart, smiling at you the whole way to the checkout.

Love it or not, I’ve learned something over the years: love doesn’t keep the best for itself. It gives. Even when it tugs a little on your heart.

As I watched her pack it up and put it in her car, I was reminded that unselfish, open-handed love—points us straight to Jesus.

He didn't just say He loved us—He laid down His life to prove it. That kind of love doesn't come from a place of ease. It comes from a place of sacrifice. A choice. A cross. A Savior who held nothing back. That we might know real love.



This is how we know what love is: Jesus
Christ laid down his life for us.
And we ought to lay down our lives for
our brothers and sisters.

-1 John 3:16

Did you catch John's words there? His invitation to mirror the love of our Savior?

He's reminding us here that real love lays something down.

It lays down time when you're exhausted and someone needs your help.

It lays down pride to say, "I'm sorry," even when you weren't entirely wrong.

It lays down plans to show up for someone who's hurting.

It lays down comfort to serve, patience to parent, and the right to be right—just to make peace.

It lays down the last piece of pie.

The chance to be heard, so someone else feels understood.



❓ John writes, "Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends" (John 15:13). What are some practical ways you can lay something down—our time, comfort, or pride—for the sake of others this week?

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It's easy to miss that kind of love when you're in the middle of an ordinary day. When the laundry piles up, you're helping out at church, driving back and forth to school, taking care of in-laws... and your soul feels a little weary from all the pouring out. But Jesus sees it. And He knows it—because He lived it.

Christmas is a celebration of that love. Not a shallow kind that shows up for the party and disappears when things get hard. But a steady, sacrificial love that came down from heaven, and wrapped itself in humanity. A costly love that stepped into our mess, bore our sin, and laid down everything for us—not because we earned it, but because we're His.



He didn't love us from a distance. He came close.

He laid down His life not only to rescue us from sin, but also to invite us into friendship with Him.

You are my friends if you do what I command.

—John 15:14

“My friends...” those words are personal and deeply, deeply real.

So if you feel like what you’re offering doesn’t matter...

If you’re quietly laying things down for the good of your family, your church, your friends, or your community...

If you’re wondering whether that kind of love is seen, be reminded of this—Jesus sees it. And He calls it great love.

The kind that gives. The kind that shows up. The kind that lays something down, not because it’s easy—but because He did it first.

This is the beauty of Christmas. This is the gift.



Jesus’ love was both costly and personal. How does remembering His sacrifice at Christmas shape the way you give and serve those around you?

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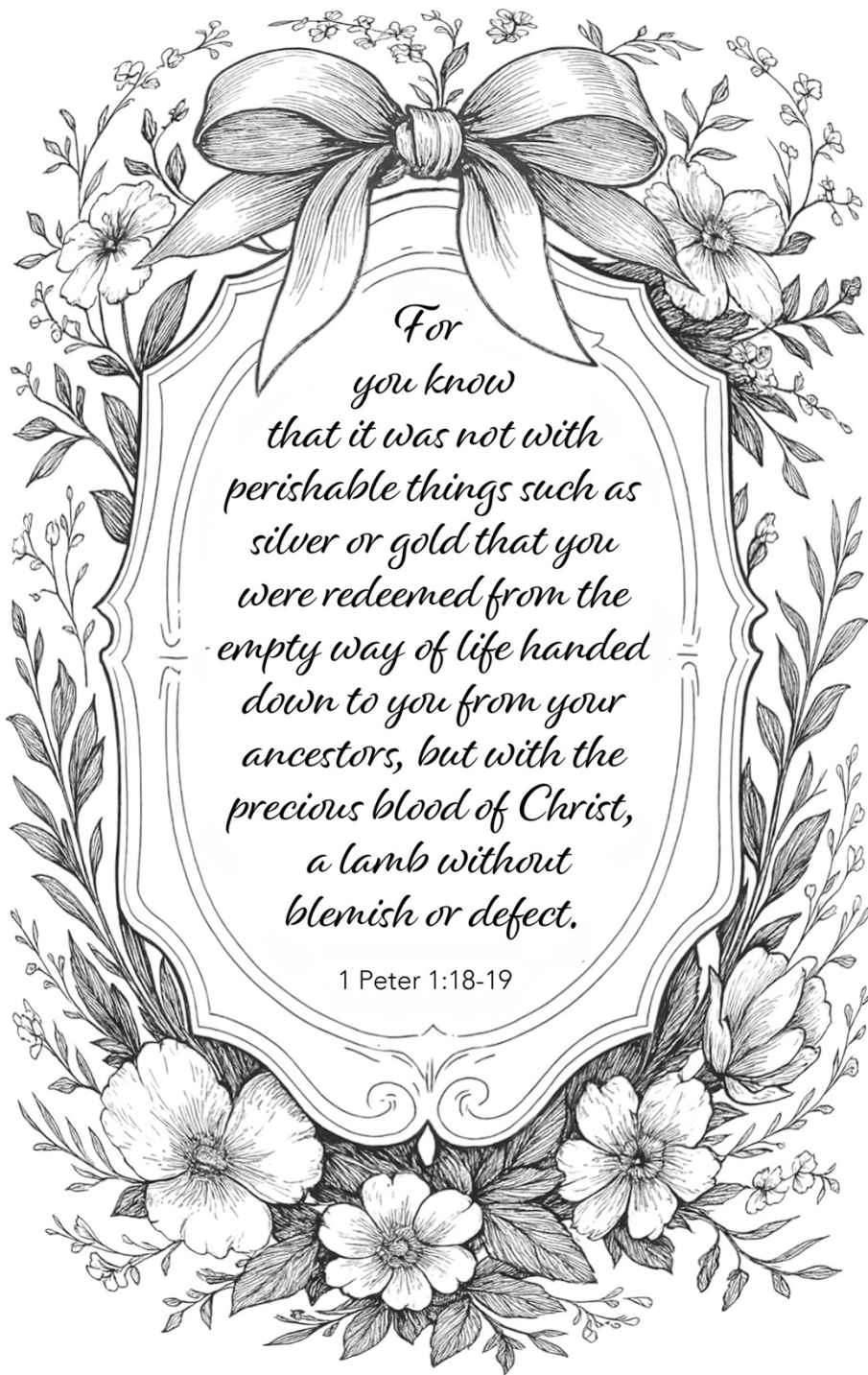
Wise Men Still Seek Him

Christ's death is the great proof of His love to man. He loved us so that He died for us; and the greatness of His love is shown by the greatness of His sacrifice.

—J.C. Ryle

Unwrapping the Gift

Find one way to show love that costs you something today. It might stretch your time, your comfort, or your wallet—but do it joyfully, as an offering of love to Christ who gave all for you.



*For
you know
that it was not with
perishable things such as
silver or gold that you
were redeemed from the
empty way of life handed
down to you from your
ancestors, but with the
precious blood of Christ,
a lamb without
blemish or defect.*

1 Peter 1:18-19

Love That Paid The Price



Suggested Reading: Luke 21:1-4

As you read about the widow's offering, notice how Jesus values the heart behind her gift more than the size of it. Her sacrifice was quiet and unseen by most, yet fully noticed by God. Let her example remind you that love isn't measured by what we give, but by what it costs us to give. True generosity reflects the heart of Christ, who gave all He had for us.

Optional Reading: 1 Peter 1:18-19

Peter reminds us that our salvation wasn't bought with silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ. As you reflect on these verses, think about the price He paid for your redemption and how that same sacrificial love shapes the way we give, serve, and forgive.



\$3,674.49. That's the price you pay for love when your son-in-law's out of work, his van isn't insured, and he needs to move his family two provinces away. At least that's what the inflation calculator says. Back then, it was \$1,000—a huge sacrifice for one income with five mouths to feed.

But that's what Mom and Dad were all about—sacrificial love. The cost of parenting is high, and the truth is once you're a parent, you never stop giving. From the moment they take their first breath until the day you take your last your heart is theirs.

It's funny how those sacrifices don't always feel like sacrifices in the moment. You just do what love requires. You drive the extra mile, skip your own plans, stretch your budget, or lose a little sleep—because that's what love looks like when it's lived out. Real love doesn't measure what it gives; it simply gives. And though the cost is great at times, the return is far greater.

Of course, sacrificial love isn't limited to parenting—it reaches into every corner of our lives. Maybe you've sat beside a friend at the hospital when your schedule was full, or brought a meal to someone when your own to-do list was a mile long. Perhaps you've given up a weekend at the lake to lend a helping hand, or prayed through the night when you needed rest yourself.

There's a price to pay for sacrificial love. The question is, how much are you willing to pay? Whether you're a mother, a daughter, a sister, or a friend, when you pay the price of love, you reflect the heart of Christ.



Peter reminds us that our redemption didn't come cheap. "It was not with perishable things such as silver or gold," he wrote, "but with the precious blood of Christ." Those words stop me in my tracks. Silver and gold—the highest measures of human value—can't even begin to compare. Our salvation wasn't purchased in a marketplace. It was secured on a cross.

Think about that for a moment. The blood that dripped from His hands was the price of our pardon. The suffering He endured was the cost of our peace. The crown of thorns that pierced His brow opened the way for us to wear a crown of life. What greater love could there be?

And this is where it meets us—right here in our ordinary days. When you choose forgiveness over resentment, when you give time that you don't have, when you love someone who's hard to love—you're reflecting love that paid a price.

Stop and picture this... Luke chapter 21—but set in 2025. Jesus is sitting near the temple treasury, watching as people bring their gifts. Some

offer brand-new cell phones, others drop off smart watches and big-screen TVs. The gifts are beautifully wrapped with shiny paper and oversized bows—some even perched on top of new cars. And then, there's a widow. Quiet. Alone. She's carrying homemade pie. No ribbons. No sparkle. Just a simple dish, and plastic wrap.

And Jesus sees her.

He knows that she has stretched her grocery budget beyond what others would. That she took time out of an incredibly busy week to stop and think of others. He noticed that she gave everything she had and laid it at His feet.

Maybe you don't have extra money to decorate your house, but you have an open door. Maybe you can't host a fancy dinner, but you have an extra chair. Maybe you don't have the budget to spend on fancy gifts, but you can...

knit a scarf,
bake bread
volunteer
babysit
donate clothing to a charity
shovel a walk
make tea towels from scraps of fabric
draw a picture
write a letter or a song.

Love doesn't have to be extravagant to make a difference—but it should come from the heart.

Every sacrificial act of love, no matter how small, reminds us of our Savior and His love that paid the price.

This is the beauty of Christmas. This is the gift.

Wise Men Still Seek Him

If Jesus Christ be God and died for me, then no sacrifice can be too great for me to make for Him.

—C.T. Studd

① Looking at Luke 21:1-4, what did Jesus see in the widow's heart that made her gift so valuable in His eyes?

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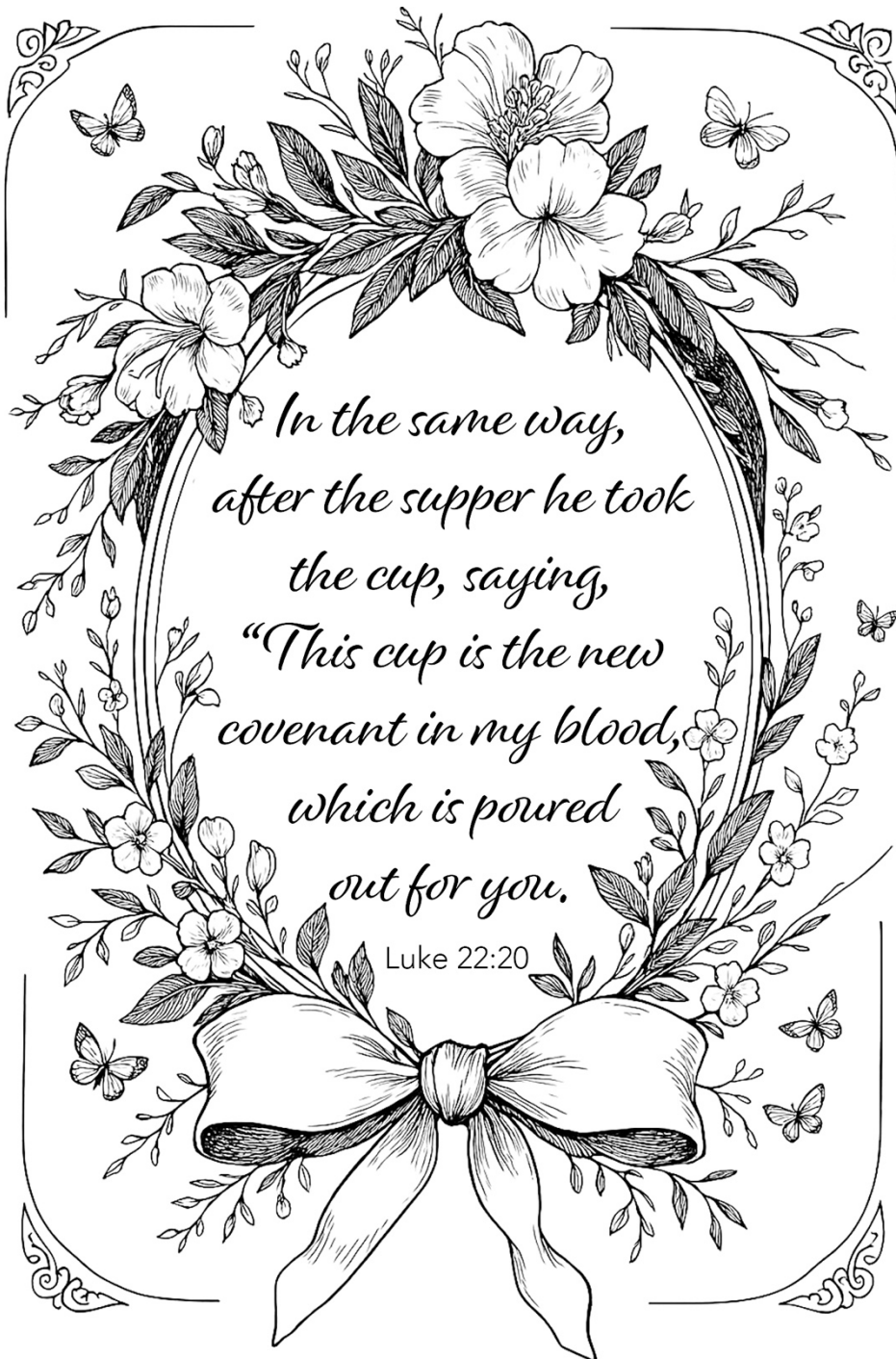
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Unwrapping the Gift

Find one way to lay something down for someone else today. It might be your time, your comfort, or your right to be understood. Ask the Lord to help you love with open hands and a willing heart, remembering the One who held nothing back for you.



*In the same way,
after the supper he took
the cup, saying,
“This cup is the new
covenant in my blood,
which is poured
out for you.*

Luke 22:20

Love That Was Poured Out



Suggested Reading: Luke 7:36-50

As you read this passage, notice the contrast between the Pharisee's self-righteous restraint and the woman's unrestrained love. Her story reminds us that when we truly grasp the depth of God's grace, love can't help but overflow.

Optional Reading: Philippians 2:5-8

Paul reminds us that Jesus 'made himself nothing' and 'became obedient to death—even death on a cross.' Let this passage draw your heart back to the humility of Christ, who poured Himself out fully so that we might be filled.



As much as I hate to admit it, some years I get gift anxiety. I think I've found the perfect gift, but once it's wrapped and under the tree, I start second-guessing myself. Maybe they won't like it? Maybe it's silly? Maybe I should've found something more meaningful?

And if I'm on social media? Then the comparisons sneak in. I should have been more creative. I could've made something beautiful if I had more time. I would've found the perfect thing if I'd just ordered from that website.

Could've. Would've. Should've. Three little words that pull our hearts away from what matters most—Christ. The One who gave the greatest gift of all, not because it was polished or Pinterest-worthy, but because it was necessary. Life-changing. Eternal.

At the Last Supper, Jesus held a cup in His hands. It wasn't a cup of celebration—it was a cup of sacrifice. He knew what was coming: betrayal, suffering, and the weight of the world's sin. Yet He lifted that cup and said,

“This is the new covenant in my blood,
which is poured out for you.”

-Luke 22:20

Those words carry the weight of redemption. They tell us that real love doesn't just feel something—it does something. It moves. It gives. It

sacrifices. Jesus didn't offer love from a comfortable place. He poured Himself out entirely. Nothing held back.

I think about how we use that phrase, "poured out." We pour out our energy raising kids, managing our homes, serving at church, staying up late to pray for a friend, or simply holding things together when no one else sees. Sometimes we're running on empty and still pouring out—filling lunch boxes, showing up for Bible study, answering texts from someone who needs prayer, folding one more load of laundry when our backs ache and our hearts feel stretched thin. And while those things may seem small or ordinary, they matter. They reflect a Savior who gave in the quiet, unseen moments too. The world may not applaud that kind of love, but God sees it—and He does.



Jesus didn't give from a limited well—He became the well. His blood, His body, His very life was poured out so that we could be filled. That's the kind of love He offers. Not cautious. Not calculated. But willing and wholehearted. A love that goes all in.

And God started digging the well that first Christmas.

❓ As you reflect on Philippians 2:5-8, write down two ways the message of Christmas reminds you to pour out love for others as Jesus poured out His life for you.

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From cradle to cross, His love kept pouring out—patiently, purposefully, completely. In abundance. Down dusty old roads, across stormy waters, through the courts of the temple and the streets of Jerusalem—His steps were steady, His heart always set on the will of His Father. Every mile He walked was love in motion, moving toward the cross so we could find our way into His arms.

So this Christmas, rest in this truth: you don't have to be perfect, or get everything right. You don't have to carry the weight of doing more, being more, or measuring up to anyone's expectations. Turn your heart toward Jesus—right where you are—and soak in His grace. He came low so we could be lifted. Gave fully so we could live freely. And even now, His love is enough for the tired, the waiting, the grieving, and the quietly faithful.

Wherever you are, however you feel—in the quiet, in the chaos, in the hustle and bustle of Christmas—He's pouring out love: patiently, purposefully, completely.

This is the beauty of Christmas. This is the gift.

Who, though he was in the form of God, did not count
equality with God a thing to be grasped, but
emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant,
being born in the likeness of men.

-Philippians 2:6-7, ESV

Wise Men Still Seek Him

Love is never wasted, for its value does not rest upon reciprocity.

—C.S. Lewis



As you read Luke 7:36-50, write down one way the woman's response to Jesus challenges you to love Him with deeper humility and gratitude.

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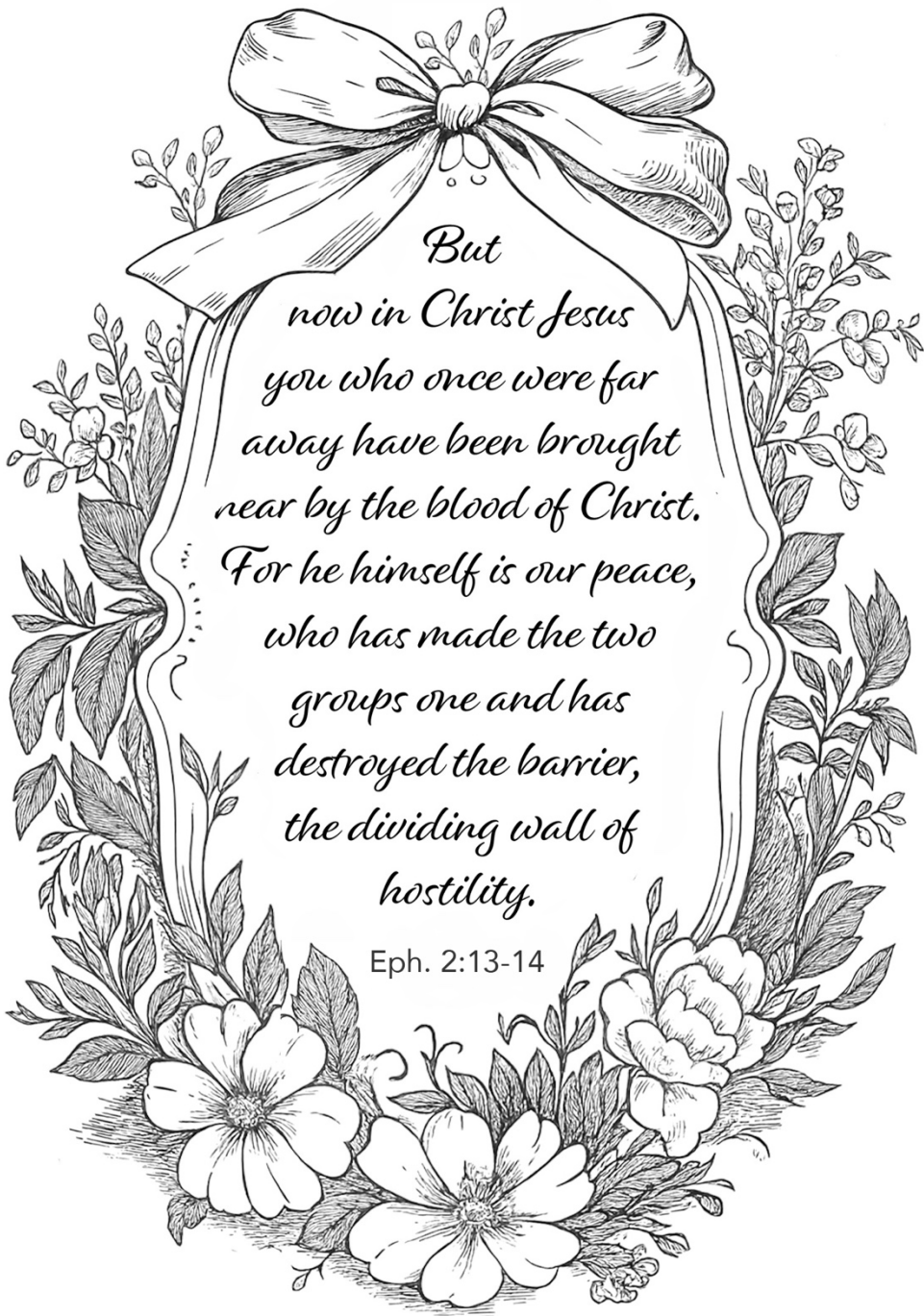
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Unwrapping the Gift

Find one way to pour out love for someone without expecting anything in return. It might be as simple as writing a note of encouragement, offering help where it goes unnoticed, or showing patience when it's hard. Let it be an act of worship—a quiet reflection of the Savior who gave Himself completely for you.





*But
now in Christ Jesus
you who once were far
away have been brought
near by the blood of Christ.
For he himself is our peace,
who has made the two
groups one and has
destroyed the barrier,
the dividing wall of
hostility.*

Eph. 2:13-14

Love that tore the Veil



Suggested Reading: Matthew 27:45-54

As you read the account of Jesus' death, pause when you reach verse 51: "At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom." Don't rush past it. The heavy veil that once separated humanity from the presence of God was ripped apart. What had stood as a barrier for centuries was gone in an instant. Through Christ's sacrifice, full access to the Father was made possible—not for the perfect, but for the forgiven. As you read this passage, picture that moment in the temple and remember that nothing stands between you and the love of God.

Optional Reading: Ephesians 2:13-18

Paul reminds us that Jesus "has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility." His blood not only reconciled us to God but also made peace possible between people. As you reflect on these verses, think about how the tearing of the veil reaches into your relationships today—healing, restoring, and bringing peace where there was once distance.



When my daughter got married, I was captivated by the veils. We must have looked at dozens of them—delicate tulle, soft lace, intricate embroidery, pearls, a little sparkle here and there. Each one was beautiful in its own way. But what moved me most was what the veil meant. That moment when it's lifted? It's not just tradition—it's a picture of love and access. A covenant has been made, and with it, comes closeness.

That picture of closeness and covenant love brings to mind another veil—one far less delicate but infinitely more meaningful: the heavy curtain that hung in the temple. This veil, as they called it, separated the Holy of Holies from the rest of the people. Only one man—the high priest—could pass through it. And not every day. Just once a year. With fear and trembling, he stepped into the presence of God.

The veil sent a clear message: God is holy, and we are not.

And then came Jesus.

When Christ was born, the world rejoiced—angels sang, God was near. But behind the celebration, behind the shepherds, the wisemen, the manger, the star... the veil still remained. Separating us from God, separating holiness from human failure.

But not for long.

Because that baby in the manger would grow up and willingly stretch His arms out on a cross. And in that moment—when He took our sin, our shame, our punishment upon Himself—something miraculous happened.

At that moment the curtain of the temple was
torn in two from top to bottom.

-Matthew 27:51

Top to bottom. That's important. Man didn't tear it—God did.

In one breathtaking moment, Jesus removed every barrier between us and the Father. He didn't just patch things up—He made a way where there was no way.

Paul puts it beautifully in Ephesians chapter 2:

For he himself is our peace, who has made the
two groups one and has destroyed the
barrier, the dividing wall of hostility.

-Ephesians 2:14

Through Jesus, we're no longer on the outside looking in. We're welcomed. We're invited. We're brought near. And that's deeply personal.

But then, there are other walls we build. Maybe not with bricks and mortar, but with pride, resentment, fear, or hurt. Maybe there's tension in your family this Christmas, or a friendship that's gone cold. Maybe your heart feels distant from someone you once felt close to.





As you read Matthew 27:45-54, write down one thing the torn veil reveals to you about God’s heart and what it means to have full access to Him through Christ.

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Can I remind you of something? The One who tore the veil still tears down walls today—walls of pride, hurt, and distance.

He’s the same yesterday, today, and forever. His love is strong enough to soften hearts, restore what’s broken, and draw us back together.

And when we let His love guide our steps? Peace becomes more than simply a wish—it becomes a possibility.

This Christmas, maybe God is nudging you to take a step. To forgive first. To reach across the silence. To open your heart again. Not because it’s easy. But because Jesus made peace possible.

He tore the veil so we could draw near.

He gave us a gift so we could give it to others.

This is the beauty of Christmas. This is the gift.



Wise Men Still Seek Him

The tearing of the temple curtain was God's declaration that there's no longer a barrier between His holiness and our need. The way home has been opened.

—Alistair Begg

Unwrapping the Gift

Ask God to show you one relationship where a wall still stands. Then, take a small step toward peace—send a message, extend forgiveness, or pray for reconciliation. Remember, the same power that tore the veil can soften even the hardest heart.

