

## **“No Longer Slaves”**

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away, behold, all things have become new.” **2 Corinthians 5:17**

Tenderly we are watched over and gently lead “in the paths of righteousness for His name’s sake.” (**Psalm 23:3b**) He is our creator. The one who made heaven and earth is our shepherd. God gave His only son to die for us, to save us from our sins that we might be born again. When we turn from our old life, the seeds are sown for new life in Christ with meaning and purpose as we worship the true and living God. Since Jesus Christ willingly died for us on the cross, He asks us to die to our old self. The Bible puts it this way. “For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with that we should no longer be slaves.” Hallelujah! Thank you, Jesus, for giving us freedom from our old sinful nature and living in us, making us a new person. Jesus Christ is our treasure forever. True meaning and purpose for life has been found in knowing Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. It is a joy to know the love of the Lord and serve him. Do you know Jesus in your heart of hearts, or do you just know about him? Consider the words Jesus spoke: “Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me.” (**Revelation 3:20**)

**John 3:16, Galatians 5:1, Matthew 16:24-25**

### **Prayer:**

Father in Heaven, thank you that I am a new creation. Help me to die to my old self so that I will be more like Jesus. Amen.

## Joy In Adversity

In James 1:2, Jesus' half-brother tells us that when trouble of any kind comes our way, consider it an opportunity for great joy.

In that scripture, James delivers a one-two punch. First, he didn't say *if* trouble comes our way but *when* it comes our way. Basically, he's letting us know we will have hardships. And then he tells us to consider these difficulties as an opportunity for *great* joy.

That makes no sense in our current culture. We do all we can to avoid problems, and the thought of being joyful when facing adversity is unheard of.

But God's way aren't our ways, and His thoughts aren't our thoughts. (Isaiah 55:8) He knows that going through difficult times will strengthen and develop our character. When our faith is tested, our endurance has a chance to grow. (**1 Peter 1:6-7**)

In this growth, we can choose to live with joy. God's faithfulness teaches us to respond to all circumstances with joy. Joy comes from knowing that nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord. (**Romans 8:38-39**)

### Prayer Points:

- Ask God for wisdom to help you solve your problems or give you the strength to endure them.
- Thank God for walking beside you, especially during challenging times.
- Pray Romans 8:38-39 to help you choose joy knowing that God cares for you and that nothing can separate you from His love.

## Standing On the Rock

“He also brought me up out of a horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my steps.” **Psalm 40:2**

You have been called out of the darkness to be salt and light. You have the keys to the kingdom of Heaven. God is on your side. Angels are watching over you. You are a new creation. Your old life has passed away. “For we are God’s masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things He planned for us long ago.” (**Ephesians 2:10** NLT) You now have a rich spiritual inheritance. You are a child of God. Because Jesus shed His blood for you, your sins were forgiven when you invited Christ into your life as Lord and Savior. When you asked for forgiveness of your sins, Christ washed you in His own blood and blotted out your sins. “For God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin, so that we could be made right with God through Christ.” (**2 Corinthians 5:21** NLT) Your life is now hidden in Christ. “For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.” (**Colossians 3:3**) You now belong to Christ and He has sealed you with the Holy Spirit as a promise of your salvation. This is the same spirit that raised Christ from the dead. “But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.” (**Romans 8:11**) You are on solid ground because you are standing on the rock, Jesus Christ. Jesus went to the cross to bear our sins and to give us right standing with God. Thank you, Jesus, for the cross.

**1 Peter 2:9, Matthew 16:19, Psalm 118:6, Psalm 91:1, Galatians 3:29, Romans 8:16-17, Revelation 1:5, 2 Corinthians 1:21, 1 Peter 2:29**

### Prayer:

Father, I am so thankful I am living in the light of Christ. Because of the sacrifice Jesus made, I am a new creation, and I glorify your name. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.

## Knowledge vs Wisdom

Knowledge is defined as an acquaintance with facts. Intelligence can be hereditary and knowledge can come from studying facts. Wisdom, on the other hand, signifies the ability to apply that knowledge with discernment and good judgment. The late Rev. Billy Graham said “Wisdom is applying knowledge with discernment and good judgment; knowledge is (*just*) fact-finding.” (parenthesis added)

It’s been said that a person’s mind is not a container to be filled, but rather a fire to be kindled. Pray that as we reflect on what we’re taught from the Word, we’re not trying to absorb facts and “helpful hints” on living as much as we’re opening ourselves to being ignited with the fire of the Spirit!

Then we can receive real wisdom. “But the wisdom from above is pure first of all; it is also peaceful, gentle, and friendly; it is full of compassion and produces a harvest of good deeds; it is free from prejudice and hypocrisy.” (**James 3:17**, Good News Translation) This is the kind of wisdom that will serve us all well and will bring glory to our King.

### **Prayer:**

Lord, help us to be open to all You have for us. Give us Your wisdom and make us vessels that can light a spark in the lives of those around us.

## Revolutionary Kind of Love

Jesus gave His disciples a new commandment: “Love each other. Just as I have loved you, you should love each other.” As believers, we are His disciples so this commandment applies to us. **(John 13:34)**

When the Pharisees asked Jesus which was the most important commandment in the law of Moses, He answered, “You must love the LORD your God with all your heart, all your soul and all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. A second is equally important: Love your neighbor as yourself.” **(Matthew 22:37-39)**

To love others wasn't a new commandment (see **Leviticus 19:18**) but to love others as much as Jesus loved others was revolutionary. He told us to love others the way He loves us! He even told us to love our enemies and to pray for those who persecute us! **(Matthew 5:44)**  
How is that even possible?

Loving others, especially our enemies, without expecting anything in return is not something we can do in our own power. This kind of love isn't something we can fake or force.

To have this kind of love for others can only happen when we humble ourselves and remind ourselves that Jesus died on the cross for us. He also sent the Holy Spirit to pour out God's love into our hearts so that we can love others the way He loves us. **(Romans 5:5)**

### Prayer Points:

- Invite the Holy Spirit to pour out God's love into your heart so you can love others the way He loves you.
- Ask God to humble you and remind you of Jesus' sacrifice on the cross that none of us deserve yet He did it in obedience to His Father's will because God so loved the world.
- Pray for your enemies as Jesus instructed us to do. Remember that you will never look into the eyes of someone that God does not love.

## “Singing Lips”

“You, God, are my God, earnestly I seek You; I thirst for You, my whole being longs for You, in a dry and parched land where there is no water.” **Psalm 63:1** NIV

King David wrote Psalm 63 when he was being pursued by his enemies who wanted to kill him. He was in a dry and parched land, the Desert of Judah. There are times we can find ourselves in a spiritual desert feeling like David, dry and parched for a lack of spiritual water. What is it we need? David cried out a song of praise to the Lord even as his enemies pursued him. What did he do in his time of trouble? He gave glory to God. He said, “Because Your love is better than life, my lips will glorify You.” (**Psalm 63:3** NIV) What enemies are pursuing you and trying to rob you of your peace? Could it be unforgiveness, anger, jealousy, pride, rejection, rebellion? Only you can answer that, but God sees your heart and knows your thoughts. So, David looked to God and not his enemies. David said, “I will praise You as long as I live, and in Your name I will lift up my hands. I will be fully satisfied as with the richest of foods; with singing lips I will praise You. (**Psalm 63:4-5** NIV) Your enemies will flee at the sound of praise, and you will find help as David did. “Because You are my help, I sing in the shadow of your wings. I cling to You; Your right hand upholds me. **Psalm 63:7-8** NIV

**Psalm 139:3**

### Prayer:

Heavenly Father, I know when the enemy is working against me, I must turn to you for help and give you praise for the victory that is mine. You are always there for me. Praise belongs to you. Amen

## One Day At A Time

Have you ever thought about how much time you spend dwelling on the past or worrying about the future? Not only is it a huge waste of time because we can't change the past and we certainly can't control the future, but worrying is something Jesus tells us specifically NOT to do.

“Therefore, do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.” (**Matthew 6:34** NLT)

It's not easy to accept the restrictions of living one day at a time. It's in our nature to worry. But with daily practice, we can learn to rely on God and stop trying to work things out before their time or dwell on things that have already happened.

When we submit each day to God, there will be a refreshing simplicity about our lives; a sense of freedom knowing that our Creator/Redeemer is in control.

We were created to live by faith, not by sight, so trusting God to manage each day is pleasing to Him. All we need to do is ask the Holy Spirit who indwells us to provide the strength, wisdom and guidance we need moment by moment.

When we pray about everything and tell God what we need, thanking Him for all He has done, we will experience His peace that will guard our hearts and minds! (**Philippians 4:6-7**)

### Prayer Points:

- Ask Holy Spirit to guide you and give you strength and wisdom as you trust God to care for your needs each day.
- Pray about everything and tell God what you need.
- Thank God for ALL He has done so you can experience His peace that surpasses all understanding.

## He Sees Your Tears

“Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.” **Matthew 5:4**

In times of sorrow, turn to the Lord. He will be your strength. Ask for His grace to sustain you. He has said in His word, “The Lord himself goes before you and will be with you; He will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged.” (**Deuteronomy 31:8** NIV) He knows the pain in your heart. He sees your tears. He knows the sorrow of your heavy heart. He will guide you and give you what you need moment by moment if you just ask. He is the one who knows everything about you. He is the one who died for you and He knows how you feel. He faced an agonizing pain on the cross as He died to save us from our sins. He knows your pain. Jesus cares for you. He is the one you can trust to bear your burden and ease the sorrow in your heart. His words of comfort to you, “He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds. (**Psalm 147:3**) At times there are no answers as to why things happen. Only God knows the answers. What can we do when our “why God” has no apparent answer? The answer from God is found in **Proverbs 3:5** “Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding.” Remember He sees your tears and His mercy is new every morning. He will always be there for you just as He said.” Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, Yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.” (**Isaiah 41:10**)

**Psalm 28:7, 2 Corinthians 12:9, Psalm 32:8, Luke 12:7, Isaiah 52:14, Isaiah 55:9, Lamentations 3:23.**

### Prayer:

Heavenly Father, you see my tears and you know how I feel. I ask you to strengthen me and help me during this time as my heart seems broken in so many pieces. Thank you for your love and comfort. I pray in Jesus name, Amen.