

**IT WAS  
ALL FOR  
LOVE**

**ONLY BY GRACE**

This devotional has no named author, as we wish for all the glory and recognition to be given to God alone.

This material is not perfect, as it was created by imperfect and limited people. Its sole purpose is to encourage you to pause for a moment during your day to reflect on the true meaning of Easter.

We are deeply grateful for the dedication, love, and commitment that Marta, Ricardo, Camila, Cleo, Andrea, António, Jéssica, Levi, and João have poured into this project.

**Note:** This devotional is distributed free of charge. We challenge you, once you have finished reading, to pass it on to someone else, place it in a neighbor's mailbox, or leave it in a public spot where someone might find it, so that the message of Salvation may reach as many people as possible

# Day One

## God Became Man

While the creatures of the earth went about their lives unnoticed, divinity arrived. Heaven itself opened and placed its most precious Being into a human womb. In an instant, the Omnipotent became fragile. He, who had been spirit, became tangible. He, who was greater than the universe, became an embryo. And He, who sustains the world with a single word, chose to depend on a young woman for food.

God as a fetus. The Creator of life being conceived. God gained eyebrows, elbows, two kidneys, and a spleen. He stretched His developing limbs and floated in His mother's amniotic fluid. He came, not as a bolt of light or an unreachable conqueror, but as someone whose first cries were heard. The hands that first held Him were rough and calloused. No silk. No ivory. No publicity. No party. No thunderous roar. If not for the shepherds, there would have been no welcome. If not for a group of star-gazers, there would have been no gifts.

Angels watched as Mary changed God's diaper. The universe looked on in wonder as the Almighty learned to walk. Children played in the street with Him. Oh, if only the leader of the synagogue in Nazareth knew who was listening to his sermons! For thirty-three years, He felt everything you and I feel. He felt weak. He grew tired. He felt the fear of failure.

To think of Jesus through this lens almost feels irreverent, doesn't it? It is much easier to keep humanity away from the incarnation. To clean up the manure around the manger. To wipe the sweat from His eyes. To pretend He never snored, or blew His nose, or hit His thumb with a hammer. It's easier to digest Him that way. There is something about keeping Him purely divine that keeps Him distant, protected, and predictable. But don't do that. Let Him be as human as He intended

to be. Let Him into the mud of our world.

**For only if we let Him in, can He lead us out.**

## Day Two

### **Easter leads us toward the deliverance of God's people**

In the Old Testament, the people had spent over 400 years of servitude in Egypt until God, hearing their cry, decided to deliver them from slavery. He raised up Moses to lead the exodus. In obedience to God, Moses appeared before Pharaoh, delivering the divine command: "Let my people go." To awaken Pharaoh's conscience to the seriousness of the message from the Lord, Moses, through the power of God, called down plagues as judgment against Egypt.

Throughout these plagues, Pharaoh would agree to let the Israelites go, but he would go back on his word once the plague ended, until the time came for the tenth and final plague, which would leave the Egyptians with no choice but to release the Israelites. God sent a destroying angel through the land of Egypt to eliminate "every firstborn," from men to animals (Exodus 12:12). To protect His people, the Lord issued a specific command; obedience to this command would bring divine protection to each Israelite family and their respective firstborn. Each family had to take a one-year-old male lamb, without blemish, and sacrifice it. Part of the blood was to be sprinkled on the sides and tops of the doorframes of their houses. When the destroyer passed through that land, he would pass over the houses with the sprinkled blood and spare the life of the firstborn of that family (hence the term Passover, from the Hebrew "Pesah," meaning "to pass over" or "to spare").

Thus, by the blood of the lamb, the Israelites were protected from the death sentence carried out against all Egyptian firstborns. God commanded the sign of the blood not because He had no other way to distinguish the Israelites from the Egyptians, but because He wanted to teach His people the importance of obedience and redemption through blood, preparing for the appearance of the

“Lamb of God” who, centuries later, would take away the sin of the world (John 1:29). Pharaoh’s son also died that night. He then allowed the Israelites to be released from slavery, leaving the land of Egypt. Everything happened as the Lord had said (Exodus 12:29-36). They emerged victorious; it was a day of judgment for Egypt, but of salvation for the people of God. From that moment in history, God’s people were to celebrate Passover every spring, obeying God’s instructions that this celebration would be a “lasting ordinance” (Exodus 12:14).

The Israelites sacrificed a lamb to save their families. God sacrificed His own Son to save us and set us free from sin. During the Jewish Passover feast, Jesus died on the cross in our place. Jesus was crucified at Passover as the Passover Lamb who sets free from sin and death all those who believe in Him. Now, whoever believes in Jesus as their savior is free from condemnation. Therefore, Passover contains a rich prophetic symbolism speaking of Jesus Christ. The New Testament explicitly teaches that the Jewish feasts “are shadows of the things to come”: the redemption through the blood of Jesus Christ. Exodus 12, with the institution of the first Passover, reminds us of our Savior and His purpose for us:

- a) God brought the Israelites out of Egypt not because they were a deserving people, but because He loved them and because He was faithful to His covenant (Dt 7:7-10); similarly, the salvation we receive from Christ comes through God’s marvelous grace (Eph 2:8-10);
- b) The purpose of the blood applied to the doorframes was to save the firstborn of each family from death; this foreshadows the shedding of Christ’s blood on the cross in order to save us from death and from God’s wrath against sin (Heb 9:22);
- c) The male lamb without blemish prefigures the perfection of Christ, the perfect Son of God (John 8:46);
- d) The sprinkling of blood on the doorframes was carried out with obedient faith (Heb 11:28); this obedience through faith then resulted in redemption through the blood.

**Salvation through the blood of Christ is obtained only through the  
“obedience of faith” (Romans 1:5).**

## Day Three

“During the days of Jesus’ life on earth, he offered up prayers and petitions with fervent cries and tears to the one who could save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission. Son though he was, he learned obedience from what he suffered and, once made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him.” Hebrews 5:7-9

The Word, the reason for the existence of everything that was made, became flesh; He became like us in every way (except for sin) and dwelt among us to set us free from the slavery of the fear of death (John 1:3, 14 and Hebrews 2:6-18). Jesus humbled Himself and voluntarily subjected Himself to the trivialities of human life, and God did not spare Him at all, but rather gave Him up for us all (Romans 8:32). He condemned His Son, who had no sin, so that He would not have to condemn us for our sin (2 Corinthians 5:21).

It was through suffering that God taught His Son about obedience; it was through suffering that Jesus was perfected and, thus, became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey Him. In the same way, He calls us to surrender our lives to Him; He calls us to give up the fleeting pleasures of sin (Matthew 16:24) to enjoy the pleasure of communion with the Creator of all things who, despite creating everything, loves us so much that He gave His only begotten Son to preserve that communion for all eternity (John 3:16).

Just as there was a purpose for Jesus’ suffering, there is a reason for your suffering as well. This may be a consequence of your sin (for nothing and no one can separate you from the love of God [Romans 8:34-39]; however, if you choose to separate yourself from Him, choose sin, and do not strive to put your faith into practice, there will be consequences, whether here on Earth or after the first death [Revelation 20:14]). Or, it may be a suffering that produces a hope that does not disappoint (Romans 5:3-5) a suffering that perfects us and molds us in the hands of the Almighty God, who is in control of all things.

## Day Four

Today we will look at the forgiveness God has for us, based on the sacrifice and resurrection of Jesus Christ, our Savior. You are forgiven through the cross!

Romans 1:4 says that Jesus "through the Spirit of holiness was appointed the Son of God in power by his resurrection from the dead: Jesus Christ our Lord."

God's forgiveness is the fruit of Christ's work, who paid the debt of our sins on the cross. This sacrifice made forgiveness available to everyone who encounters Christ. But whoever desires forgiveness must repent of their sins; after that, all condemnation is removed from us, for God is a God who forgives. "Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death." (Romans 8:1-2).

Jesus' sacrifice guaranteed God's forgiveness. God forgives you. Rest in that. Only He is able to forgive our sins to the point of remembering them no more. Through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, animal sacrifices are no longer necessary, for the true sacrifice was symbolized through the Lamb, the Son of God.

Easter is not about a bunny or an Easter egg hunt; Easter symbolizes the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. We celebrate this event because it is through believing in Jesus' resurrection that we attain eternal life; for even if we die in the flesh, in spirit we overcome death with Jesus Christ.

Today, I invite you to ask God for forgiveness. Come to Him and repent. You don't need to carry that guilt; God forgives you completely if you are repentant. Why keep a heavy weight in your backpack, knowing that Christ died for us so that we could be saved? Hand over the weight of your backpack to God. He can bear it. You can live freely. Rest.

## Day Five

“Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death.” **Romans 8:1-2**

In Jesus, we have complete forgiveness.

In Jesus, we, who are new creations, have already been set free from all condemnation. The enemy's accusations are like arrows, trying to paralyze us and lead us to give up. He loves to discourage us, making us feel guilty and unworthy. All he wants is to distort the image of who God is and also the image of who we are in our God. But the good news is that the Bible teaches us that, through the blood of Jesus shed on the cross of Calvary, we have complete forgiveness for our sins!

God waits for our repentant and broken heart.

Although Satan does not want us to enjoy this forgiveness, we are purified from all unrighteousness and set free from condemnation. God has cast our errors into the sea of forgetfulness—isn't that wonderful?

We know that, despite what Jesus did for us, we will never reach a state of perfection here on earth, since we are human and live through a daily process of sanctification. Therefore, you can live lightly, enjoying God's full forgiveness! And you can still count on the Holy Spirit to help you.

“In their fright the women bowed down with their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, 'Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here; he has risen! Remember how he told you, while he was still with you in Galilee:

The Son of Man must be delivered over to the hands of sinners, be crucified and on the third day be raised again.' Then they remembered his words."

**LUKE 24:5-8**

## Day Six

John 19:33

“They did not break His legs”

On that long day after Jesus was crucified, fear and discouragement grew. Saturday arrives... nothing happens... hope fades... pessimism increases. John adds another detail: “That Sabbath was a high day” (v. 31). A “special Sabbath,” as the Passover Sabbath was considered. This was a problem for the Romans, who usually left bodies to rot on the cross to be devoured by birds of prey. But because of the Jewish Passover and to avoid religious riots, the Romans wanted the spectacle to end before the Sabbath.

The authorities sent soldiers to see if the crucified men had died. They broke the legs of the two who were still alive. When they came to Jesus, they were surprised to find He was already dead. But to leave no doubt, one of the soldiers pierced Jesus’ heart with a spear... But he did not break His legs!

John observes this detail—and he was standing close by, watching everything. This fact brings a ray of hope that John wishes to communicate. It proclaims the truth of Psalm 34:19-20: “The righteous person may have many troubles, but the Lord delivers him from them all; he protects all his bones, not one of them will be broken.”

Today, little importance is given to the bones of the dead, but it was common for tombs to have ossuaries where bones were kept. Joseph asked his people that

when they left Egypt, they should not forget to carry his bones and bury them in the Promised Land (Genesis 50:25; Exodus 13:19). In Hebrews 11:22, Joseph's faith is demonstrated by this request.

Just before speaking of Joseph's bones, the Bible speaks of the lamb in Exodus 12:46: "Do not break any of its bones" (see Numbers 9:12). There is something sacred about bones, even more so the bones of the Passover Lamb. Centuries later, in Ezekiel 37, the prophet sees a valley of dry bones,..and His unbroken bones are, therefore, the hope of His Resurrection (John 19:36) and, consequently, our hope as well (Ephesians 2:5-6).

**As He said: "Because I live, you also will live." Hallelujah! Jesus lives.**

## Day Seven

On August 21, 2023,

I wrote the following in my prayer journal: “There are problems that only God can solve! Because of this, I decided to surrender my life into His hands. This is the first day of my change. I know it will be painful to let go, to renounce, and to distance myself from the sources of my uncertainty and insecurity, but I know that God is with me and that ‘I can do all things through Him who strengthens me’ (Philippians 4:13).”

Today, months after surrendering my life to God, do I have a perfect life with the Father? Am I the ideal daughter? The answer is no! There are still many times when I find myself in darkness; many times I still allow sadness and insecurity to take over.

But unlike before, this darkness does not last long. If there is one thing I have learned, it is that you don't overcome darkness with physical remedies, but with spiritual ones, for Jesus came “into the world as light, so that whoever believes in me may not remain in darkness” (John 12:46). Jesus Christ shed His blood to save us from this darkness and gave us the greatest defensive tool: **His Word**.

Today, when I find myself in darkness, I am not the same person I was before. I am someone born in Christ, always ready to return to the Lord's path. Jesus gave us the greatest proof of love by dying for us; the least we can do is learn to listen

to Him and put His teachings into practice, starting by loving ourselves and our neighbors.

**“Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins.” (1 Peter 4:8)**

**Day Eight**

“Who has believed our message? He was despised and rejected by mankind, a man of suffering, and familiar with pain.” (Isaiah 53:1-3)

A scene that often shocks me is that of starving children in Africa. Skin clinging to bones, expressionless eyes, flies landing on a lifeless body. We tend to change the channel or swipe past the Instagram story. It causes us unease, discomfort... it's hard to look at. So, we try not to see it because it isn't pleasant.

The cross made Christ a rejected person. Pain and suffering bring abandonment. Hospitals are full of lonely patients; the more serious the illness, the greater the solitude. There is no beauty in the cross to trigger our admiration. We would certainly walk right past it if we found it on our way home, just as we avoid someone begging on the street with exposed wounds. Only when we see our own sores and recognize that they are what disfigured Jesus' body, do we receive Him as the One who heals us.

My prayer is that we do not flee from the reality of pain.

Lead us back to the cross, Lord, so that we may contemplate Your Son without hiding our faces from Him, and lead us to welcome the outcasts on our path. Break our standards of beauty. Give us a character like Yours.

## **Day Nine**

When the women reached the tomb, they did not find a cold, closed grave. There was a violent earthquake, for an angel of the Lord came down from heaven, rolled back the stone, and sat on it (**Matthew 28:2**).

And what were the angel's words? **"Do not be afraid!"** (v. 5).

When God enters the scene of our lives, He comes to remove all fear. If you are imprisoned by fear, be set free today by the Savior whom death could not contain! As those women hurried away from the tomb in jubilation, they experienced both fear and great joy.

Always allow your joy to be greater than your fear! Nothing in your life should be greater than the joy of God. The joy those women tasted on that Resurrection morning brought them to their knees in worship. Some of the disciples worshipped, while others doubted. And you? Will you worship or doubt? Will you stay on your knees in adoration or surrender to fear?

The power and authority that Easter proclaims should compel us to go and make disciples. Just as it was told to you... you must go and tell! God's will is for you to make disciples around you. The absolute truth of the Resurrection is that God is with you every single day. We are sent on the greatest mission in history, assured by the greatest presence heaven or earth has ever known.

**Happy Easter! Jesus has won!**

Sunday is here, and with it, Jesus' victory on the cross! The Lamb was sacrificed; the perfect sacrifice. The enemy was defeated, death was conquered! Christ lives today and for all eternity! Therefore, He tells us: “...*Do not be afraid. I am*

*the First and the Last. I am the Living One; I was dead, and now look, I am alive for ever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades” (Revelation 1:17-18).*

Because of this unforgettable day, we can be free!

A high price was paid: pure grace, undeserved favor, love that compels us!

Do you want to enjoy all of this? Simply believe and accept the perfect work of Jesus Christ on the cross.

Today is a day of joy for the victory that changed humanity forever. Hallelujah!

## PRAY FOR THE PERSECUTED CHURCH

More than 360 million Christians around the world face persecution because of their faith in Jesus Christ.

### WHAT IS PERSECUTION?

Persecuting Christians means showing hostility—through words, attitudes, or actions—towards anyone who identifies as a follower of Jesus.

Each year, the number of Christians living in fear grows: fear of going to church, losing their family, their home, or even their freedom for the sake of maintaining their faith.

### THE POWER OF PRAYER

#### **You can make a difference!**

Pray for them, asking God for courage, strength, and protection so that they do not abandon their faith. Even from afar, your prayer is a light that keeps them steadfast.

#### **And you, what are you doing with your freedom?**

Do not waste it. Live it boldly, for yourself and for those who do not have it.

**Point your camera at the QR code to see real stories.**



# Saved by Grace

saved by grace

It is about the love we feel for the Father

“Só Pela Graça.pt” is a ministry whose sole purpose is to bring the name of Jesus and His act of love to everyone.

It is an anonymous ministry, because we do not want anything to distract you from the One who loves you deeply. He alone matters; we are merely instruments in the hands of the Father.

We are always available for you, for whatever you need, to listen to you and, above all, to pray for you. We want to share this love that God reveals in His Word.

We live out this purpose through:

Bible studies, devotionals, fellowship, intercession, discipleship, and evangelism.

It is not our intention to replace a local church. On the contrary, we are always willing to accompany you to one near your home. We want to work together for the Kingdom of God.

We believe that we should not remain confined within four walls to speak of Jesus. We truly love God and His Word, and we desire not only to fill churches in Portugal, but also to fill Heaven.

All glory and honour belong solely to God. May He always be exalted.

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