

Hello, Dear Friend!

I hope this finds you in the middle of a wonderful day. I pray that God gives you abundant peace and strength this week. And, I really wish I could hear all about it in person over a cup of coffee on Saturday morning!

I may seem to be a stranger to you, but you are a dear friend to me. I love the way God puts you on my heart, even if I don't know your face. Please know that you are prayed over and that the Lord loves you dearly. He sees right into the longings and yearnings of your heart and wants to comfort you with His everlasting love.

Whatever is happening in your life now, know that it is not a surprise to God. He knows what is going on and He will guide you if you ask Him. Also know that you are neither insignificant nor unappealing to God. He knows every detail about you and your life – and He loves you anyway!

I pray that He will fill your heart with His amazing love as you read and study today. And that He will show you someone to share today's message with to spread the joy of Spring!

In His perfect love,
Jennifer

Spring in Your Heart

Spring came suddenly to my part of the world today. It is beautiful outside! As I walked my son to school, God's glory was overwhelmingly evident. I know God is no less glorious on a dreary winter day, but today every bit of nature seems to reveal His glory: the sun is bright and warm, the birds sing in harmony, the ground is fresh and dewy, and the air is crisp and pure. What a day to be alive!

It makes me realize how thankful I am to truly be alive, to know at the very depths of my soul that I am vibrantly, eternally alive - just like this spring day - and no longer dead in my sins. I'm still a sinner (anyone who knows me can verify that!) but I'm no longer dead inside because of it.

When you look inside to the very heart of who you are, to the depth of your being in the places no one else sees, do you find the stark desolation of winter days, or the budding promise of spring?

Just as nature is cleansed and made new in the spring, we can also be cleansed and made new through Christ. We can replace the dark desolation, loneliness and fear with overflowing promises and joyful hope. That is what we celebrate each spring at Easter when we remember Jesus' resurrection.

What does Jesus' death and resurrection mean to you? Is it the promise, joy and hope that brings spring to your heart? Have you accepted His death for your sins, allowing yourself to be purified and made new? Does the depth of your soul sing with God's glory?

Or, is Easter just a time to wear a new dress and hide chocolate bunnies? Is Jesus' death and resurrection something you haven't really given much thought to? Is it nice for other people, but not you? Have you decided you're better off on your own than turning to some "religion?"

Maybe you think Jesus was a good man, but not the only way to God and eternal life. Or, maybe you have forgotten what He once meant to you and you need to renew your commitment to Christ.

Only you can decide what Jesus' life, death and resurrection mean to you. No one else can tell you what to believe or make this choice for you. But, I can tell you that no choice is a choice and that remaining "undecided" is a decision.

My friend, let spring come to your heart and chase away the dark desolation, pain, and fear. Do this week's study and let your spirit be renewed. Decide what "Easter" really means to you, and then live your life accordingly.

Be renewed!



Dig Deeper

Grab your notebook and Bible and get ready to explore. **Don't rush through!** Take your time to wander through the scripture and let God speak to you.

Looking for earlier lessons? You can print them at http://www.hopeinthelord.org/Downloadable_PDF_Bible_Study_Files.html

Because the entire Bible points to Jesus, we could study almost any verses this week. I chose these verses because the truth of who Jesus is and what He did for us seems to pour out from every word in the book of John. I encourage you to take the time over the coming weeks to read the entire book of John. It is pure beauty from the first to the last.

Lesson 1

Pray for God's wisdom and then begin.

1. Read John 1:1-5. List everything you learn about "the Word" from these verses.
2. Read John 1:10-13. List everything you learn about "the Word" from these verses.
3. Read John 1:14. What additional things do you learn about "the Word?"
4. Who is "the Word?"
5. Read John 1:12-13.
 - a. According to verse 12, what does it mean to "receive" Jesus?
 - b. What is the result of "receiving" Jesus?
 - c. What does John 1:14 tell you about Jesus in your life?

Lesson 2

Pray for God's wisdom and then begin.

1. Read John 3:16.
 - a. Why did God choose to give His son?
 - b. What was God's purpose in giving His son?
 - c. In your own words, define "whoever."
- 2a. According to John 3:16, what is the result of believing in Christ?
b. What is the result of not believing in Christ?
3. Read John 3:17-18. List all the differences given between those believe in Jesus Christ and those who don't.
4. What do you learn about God's character from John 3:16-18?

- 5a. Read John 3:35-36. What is the result of choosing not to believe in Jesus?
- b. Read John 5:24. What are the results of choosing to believe in Jesus?

Lesson 3

Pray for God's wisdom and then begin.

- 1. Read John 14:1
 - a. Where is your heart troubled?
 - b. Where in your life are you uncertain?
 - c. What does Jesus say to do?
 - d. Will you do that in prayer right now?
- 2. Read John 14:2-6.
 - a. What promises did Jesus make?
 - b. What question did Thomas ask?
 - c. What was Jesus' answer?
- 3. Read John 14:6.
 - a. What do you use to guide your way?
 - b. Does it provide hope or trouble for your heart?
 - c. Where will it lead you?
- 4. Read John 14:6.
 - a. What do you use as your source of truth?
 - b. Does it provide hope or trouble for your heart?
 - c. Where will it lead you?
- 5. What is your choice for life? That which ends in eternal condemnation or eternal joy?
- 6. Read John 20:30-31.
 - a. Why does John's account, which you have been reading in these lessons, exist?
 - b. Do you believe?

If you don't know Christ as your Savior, now is the time. Read "What Matters Most" below. I am praying for you!



My soul sings with joy at the truth and salvation of Christ. There is no condemnation, only eternal life, for those who believe in and receive Him. Praise God!

He loves you deeply and will fill the yearning in your soul.

He is the way, the truth and the life.

Amen.

Jennifer

What Matters Most

Welcome, friend! I am so grateful that God has brought you to this page. Nothing in life is as important as this. Please find a quiet spot and ask God to open your heart before you start. I'm praying for you!

What is a "Christian"?

Being a Christian is not simply a matter of believing in God or attending church regularly. It is not something that comes about from doing neighborly deeds or being a good person. A Christian is someone who belongs to Christ and finds their identity in Him. A Christian is a person who has accepted Christ as her own personal Savior, making Him the Lord of her life. Being a Christian is a matter of heart and soul.

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

Do You Need a Savior?

To be a Christian, you have to acknowledge who you really are. As they say in rehab, "admitting you have a problem is the first step." You have to allow God to humble you and strip you of your pride to take this first step. You have to be ready to say, "I can't do this on my own God, I can't be good enough to save myself. I need You, Jesus."

Anyone, then, who knows the good he ought to do and doesn't do it, sins. James 4:17

We are all sinners. Not one of us has lived a perfect, sin-free life. Maybe you have never committed murder or adultery, but have you ever had an unkind or lustful thought? Maybe you don't make lying a habit, but have you ever stretched the truth?

For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. Romans 3:23

You have sinned in some way and the punishment for any sin is death. In Old Testament times they sacrificed their best animals to God as atonement (payment) for their sins. These substitute sacrifices had to be made over and over again. We no longer sacrifice animals, and it is not because it is socially unacceptable. It is because Jesus, who lived a sin-free life, was the perfect lamb, the perfect sacrifice. His death paid the price for *all* sins of *all* humanity for *all* time.

The wages of sin is death. Romans 6:23

If His death covered all sins for everyone, why isn't everyone saved? Because not everyone *accepts* Christ's death on the cross for their sins.

What If I'm Not Good Enough to Be Forgiven?

No one is. Please do not wait until you get your life "right" to turn to Christ. Do not wait until things are "under control". Don't wait until you are desperate and have no where to turn. Christ wants you to come to Him today, right now, and to not wait a moment longer. Life is uncertain and you may not have another opportunity. Do not wait to make this decision. God has led you to this page for a reason. Make your decision for Christ today.

For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous and the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive by the Spirit. 1 Peter 3:18

What If My Sins Are Too Great to Forgive?

If you are someone in this world, which you are, Jesus died to forgive *your* sins. ALL your sins, no matter how "big" they might be. This is not about the greatness of your sins; it is about the greatness of Christ and His sacrifice for you. His willful death is more powerful than any sins you have committed.

He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours, but also for the sins of the whole world. 1 John 2:2

You may still face the consequences of your sins while you are on earth, but you are forgiven and in right standing before God when you accept Jesus' sacrificial death as payment for your sins.

So, What Do I Do?

You have to 1) believe in Jesus Christ, 2) acknowledge that you are a sinner and confess your sins to Him, and 3) ask Him to be Lord of your life.

Jesus replied, "I am the way and the truth and the life, no one comes to the Father except through me." John 14:6

1. Believe in Jesus Christ

You must believe Jesus is who He says He is: fully man and fully God at the same time. You must believe He lived a perfect life, died by crucifixion on a cross, overcame death to rise again, and is now with the Father, God, in Heaven.

Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?" John 11:25

2. Acknowledge and Confess Your Sins

Take time to think about the sins you have committed: people you have wronged or need to forgive, impure thoughts and actions, lies, pride, and things you have made more important than God in your life. Ask God to help you see your sins. Then confess your sins to Christ and ask Him to forgive you.

3. Invite Jesus Christ to be Your Lord and Savior

Choose to turn your life over to Christ. Give Him permission to work on and in your heart to be all He desires you to be. Stop worrying and instead rest in the knowledge that you are secure in the arms of your Creator who loves you. Give Him control of your life. Seek His guidance in all you do and live your life for His glory and His approval. Your life won't instantly be perfect, but as you grow in Him you will find peace, joy, protection, and much more.

You don't have to know or understand everything about Jesus, God, the Holy Spirit, or the Bible. You just have to choose to believe.

All the prophets testify about Him that everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins through His name.
Acts 10:43

...the son of man has authority on earth to forgive sins...
Matthew 9:6

Really, That's All?

I know, it sounds too easy, doesn't it? It is that easy, but, at the same time, not that easy. It has to be more than merely saying the words. It has to be a desire to have a new heart and a new life.

You need to renew your commitment to Christ daily and seek a growing, personal relationship with Him. You need to get to know Him by reading your Bible and praying. Think of it as a great romance. If you had a new boyfriend, you would do all you could to spend time with Him, talk with Him, and learn more about Him. You also need to find a Bible-believing church to attend regularly and fellowship with other believers.

And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God.
Colossians 1:10

My friend, did you make the decision? Did you turn your life over to Christ? If you did not, think about why you chose not to and then ask God to show you the truth. If you did make the decision, I want to be the first to welcome you to the family. You need to tell someone!! You need to tell me! Oh how I look forward to seeing you when we all get home. God bless you!!

Share your heart with God:
