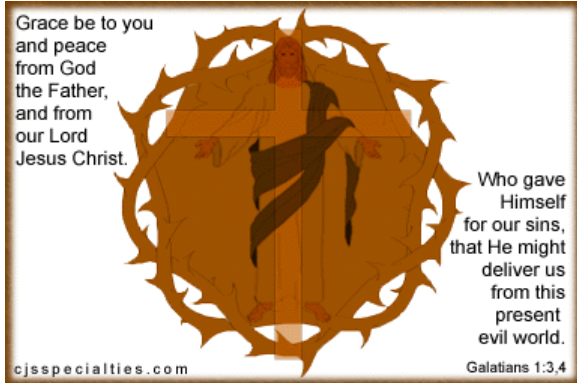
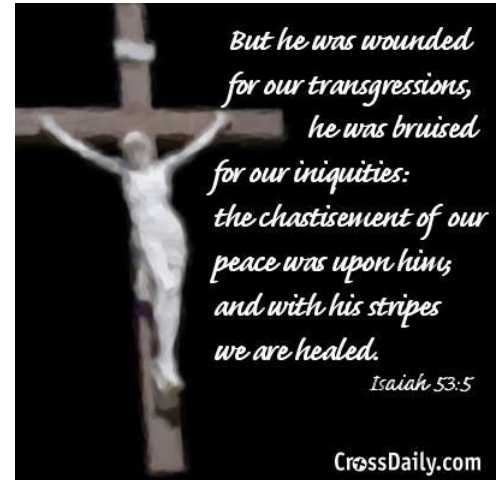


THE CROSS



All of us experience suffering and difficult circumstances at some point in our life. We live in a broken and sinful world. Unjust things happen. People are victims. Put-



downs and pain invade our lives at one time or another. Sometimes we react to the brokenness of life around us with anger and fear and bitterness. We lash out in an effort to vent and release our pain. Sometimes we drink and drug to try to forget what we are really experiencing. The death of Jesus Christ speaks directly to our experience of brokenness and pain.

What Does Jesus Say To Us From the Cross?

1. I will show you a new way to walk and a wonderful life to live.
2. I love you. I want you to have life. I want to be in relationship with you.
3. Whenever you suffer, there's always more to life than what you see. There's always a bright and caring life available to you. Nothing can separate you from my love.

We say: But you don't know my circumstances. This is what has happened to me. This is what I've done. This is what's not working for me. This is all I have. This is what I need. Until this is fixed I can't go on. It's too confusing. It's too painful. I'm too angry inside. It's not fair. I can't forgive.

Jesus responds:

- I understand pain and suffering and shame. I know loneliness, abuse, ridicule, put-downs, and rejection. They'll kill you. I can show you the way through them to a new way of life that is more amazing than anything you can imagine today. I can support you as you walk through your pain.
- I've experienced injustice. I am the way to life with God that overcomes wrongs done to you and wrongs done by you.
- There's only one way to really deal with everything that's wrong and disappointing in today. I am the only power that can save you and restore you. Come to me. I will take the punishment and consequences of your sin if you choose to walk in new life with me, following my will. Give your sin and suffering and sorrow to me. Come and follow me.

