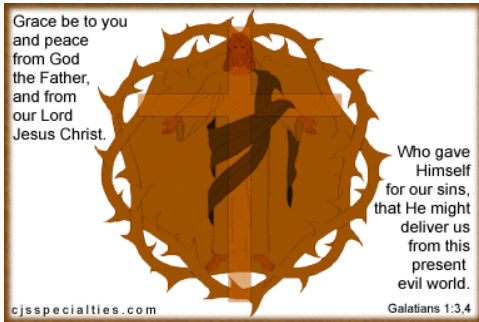


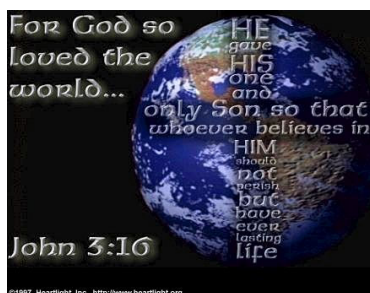
All of us experience suffering and difficult circumstances at some point in our life. We live in a broken and sinful world. Unjust things happen. People are victims. Put-downs and pain invade our lives at one time or another. Sometimes we react to the brokenness of life around us with anger and fear 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.

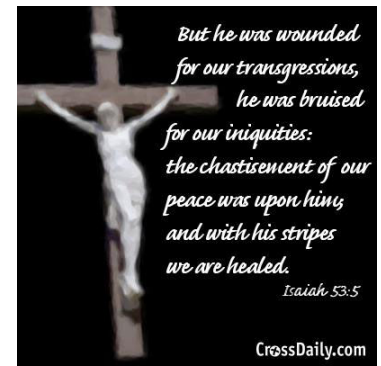
*We say: But you don't know my circumstances. This is what has happened to me. This is what I've done. This is what's not working for me. This is all I have. This is what I need. Until this is fixed I can't go on. It's too confusing. It's too painful. I'm too angry inside. It's not fair. I can't forgive.*



Jesus responds:

- o 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.
- o I've experienced injustice. I am the way to life with God that overcomes wrongs done to you and wrongs done by you.
- o 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.



On the night before Jesus was given over to death for us, Jesus had dinner with His friends. He was suffering mentally and emotionally but He chose to focus on the loving heart of His Heavenly Father, and to spend loving time with His friends. He broke bread and shared a cup of wine with them as a reminder that His heart and life would be broken and poured out for them. That was the depth of the God's love for us.

Later on in the evening as Jesus was praying, He spoke to His Heavenly Father about the task that was before Him. It seemed too much. It seemed too heavy. It seemed like there was no way through. Jesus was honest as He said, "Let this cup pass from me." However, Jesus also knew that God knows more than a person's circumstances and no matter how black and difficult it all may seem, God is in control, God cares, and God will make a way. And so Jesus added this to His prayer, "Yet not my will but your's be done." Jesus offered His will and His life to God's care.

God has told us clearly that He will never give us more than we can handle and that we can do all things through Christ who strengthens us. Jesus has shown us, through His suffering, His death, and His resurrection that God tells the truth and that even though our circumstances and our challenges seem like they are too much and seem like God doesn't care, the truth is that God is with us. God does care. God does make a way. To follow Jesus is to stand against our circumstances and our feelings and to stand with Jesus Christ. To share in the cup of salvation and the bread of life is to tell God that we are choosing in the same way that Jesus chose. That no matter what life brings our way, and no matter what works or doesn't work, we will trust our wills and our lives to the care of God. We will follow God. We will obey God's will.

