

## God's Persistent Compassion

**“I will not yield my glory to another or my praise to idols”**  
(Isaiah 42:8).

**Scripture:** Isaiah 42:1-9

**Song:** “The Love of God”

My parents have a pretty, athletic border collie who is both sweet and smart. But she has a bad habit of digging. My parents have tried various methods to discourage her, including filling the holes she's dug, putting little black booties on her feet, and laying down chain-link panels in her favorite digging sections. They'll scold her, and she'll look ashamed . . . but eventually she'll come inside with telltale muddy paws yet again.

Throughout the Old Testament, God's people abandoned their Creator for a life of idolatry. He warned them, disciplined them, showed them a better way—but again and again they went digging around in the same old pits of idolatry. God was fiercely determined not to yield His glory to idols, but His love for His people persisted. He would find a new way to reach them: through His chosen servant, the coming Messiah. The servant demonstrated God's persistent compassion to His people, showing light to the blind and bringing the lost home.

Despite our patterns of idolatry, disobedience, and misunderstandings of His purpose, God's compassion is never-ending. He sent His Son to walk with us, to teach us, and to show us a better way. In Jesus' death, He set us free forever from the sin that held us captive.

**God,** You deserve all our praise and glory. Forgive us for turning to lesser things and forgetting Your glory. Thank You for sending Jesus to set us free. In our Savior's name, amen.

April 6

## Amazed by the Resurrection

**They went out quickly, and fled from the sepulcher; for they trembled and were amazed** (Mark 16:8, *KJV*).

**Scripture:** Mark 16:1-8

**Song:** “As the Dawn Was Breaking”

As a young parent, I always felt that the best bedtime stories were Bible stories. I would select one to share with my two little girls each evening as I tucked them into bed. On one particular night, after the story of the crucifixion, I also told my girls the story of Christ’s resurrection. Dramatically, I described the great earthquake, the angel rolling the stone away, and Jesus coming out of the tomb. Suddenly, both girls burst out in applause, smiling from ear to ear in amazement!

The women who came to the empty tomb were amazed as well. They had come mourning, having seen Christ crucified just three days prior. Their biggest concern was how to roll the great stone away from the tomb to anoint the body. One can only imagine the elation they felt upon seeing the tombstone rolled away and hearing the angel’s announcement that Jesus had risen!

Each year we celebrate Christ’s resurrection at Easter. Yet we might not have all the amazement we had upon hearing about the empty tomb the first time. As Easter approaches, let’s contemplate Jesus’ terrible crucifixion, remember His sobering burial in the tomb, and be amazed once again by His triumphant rising!

**Dear Lord,** help us to be in awe once again at Your resurrection from the dead. Through the power of Your name, amen.

## Divine Redirection

**The Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do** (Acts 9:6, *KJV*).

**Scripture:** Acts 9:1-9

**Song:** “If You Will Only Let God Guide You”

In an incredible turn of events, the “White House Hatchet Man” faced being cut down to size himself—and faced going to prison. Charles Colson, Special Counsel to President Nixon, was embroiled in the Watergate scandal and faced an uncertain future. Education, influence, and a reputation for ruthlessly attacking enemies had also left Colson empty. Just then a friend gave him C. S. Lewis’ *Mere Christianity*, a book that confronted Colson with his sinful nature and need for redemption. Colson accepted Christ, and God used the Watergate crisis to redirect him to begin a prison ministry that has reached countless souls for Christ.

Like Colson, Saul of Tarsus spent years pursuing the wrong things. His pedigree, great education, and reputation for ruthlessly attacking Christians led him far from God. But on one of Saul’s quests to arrest believers, he was stopped by a vision of Jesus Christ himself and was brought face-to-face with his own sin and misdirected life. After trusting Christ, Saul (later called Paul), followed God’s redirection, becoming the greatest missionary of all time.

Regardless of our education, background, or effectiveness, crisis situations will come, and God often uses such life-shattering events to get our attention and redirect us for His purpose. As He does, He will draw us to himself and prepare us for His service.

**Dear Lord,** help us yield to Your redirection in our lives. In Your name, amen.

April 8

## A Greater Power

**For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ (Romans 5:17, *KJV*).**

**Scripture:** Romans 5:12-17

**Song:** "Rejoice! Rejoice!"

In *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*, the White Witch cited a form of magic—the law of Narnia—as a right to take Aslan's life in exchange for the traitor Edmund's. After the witch killed Aslan at the Stone Table, Susan and Lucy mourned. But suddenly, the table split in two, and Aslan appeared alive! The mighty lion explained that although the witch worked evil from her power, there was a deeper magic even more powerful that brought Aslan back to life.

Adam's disobedience infected him with a sinful nature, resulting in both spiritual and physical death. Ever since, sin's power is so great that it passes to every soul born. Yet God in His grace sent Christ to redeem mankind, offering eternal life and eventual resurrection. Just as one man, Adam, brought doom to the world, the God-man, Christ Jesus, brought redemption to the world. The power of sin is no match for the strength of God's redemptive power.

Because of Adam's sin, we were all born spiritually dead, and physical death is appointed to us all. But because of Christ, our souls can be saved and we can be redeemed. We should rejoice in the power of God, which gives us a new heart now and eternal life in Heaven.

**Dear Lord,** thank You that Your power is greater than the power of sin. In our Savior's name, amen.

## Watching for Christ's Return

**The dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words** (1 Thessalonians 4:16-18, *KJV*).

**Scripture:** 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

**Song:** "Return, O God of Love"

"Papa! Papa!" I heard my 7-year-old yelling from the porch. I live very close to my work, and I usually walk there in the morning and home again at the end of the day. My daughter had seen me through the window and came out to meet me with a smile. I was happy to know she was watching for me and was glad to see me return.

When the apostle Paul wrote to the Thessalonian believers about Jesus' return, he was writing to a church suffering persecution. Paul wanted to comfort the Thessalonians by not only assuring them that Christ was coming for them but also by the fact that those who had already died in the faith would not miss out; they would be raised to meet the Lord in the air as well. The event was not intended to be an occasion to fear but one that Paul wanted the believers to look forward to.

Today some Christians react to this "end of the world" subject with trepidation. However, the Scriptures describing Christ's coming for His church should not alarm us but excite us. Just as a child waiting for a beloved parent, we should watch for Christ's return and welcome Him with gladness.

**Dear Lord,** help us to look forward to Your return. In Your name, amen.

## Righting Every Wrong

**Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power** (1 Corinthians 15:24, *KJV*).

**Scripture:** 1 Corinthians 15:24-29

**Song:** “With the Sound of Trumpets”

In his autobiographical “A Kind of Murder,” author Hugh Pentecost described his rowdy classmates at a boys’ military academy, who gave a frightened new teacher a rough time. At one point in the story, the students disrupted the class by casting handfuls of torn paper into the air, belching loudly, and waving handkerchiefs around—to the horror of the intimidated teacher. During this bedlam, the headmaster marched into the room, and the boys instantly froze, paralyzed with fear. Their antics were quickly ended by a man of true authority.

Corinth was a large city that bred sensuality and deviance. No doubt the Christians in Corinth became discouraged with the evil around them. But Paul wrote that the corruption around them was only temporary. Christ would come again and end the reign of wrongdoers. Christ’s authority would stop the evil, and He would set up His glorious, righteous kingdom.

Like Corinth, our modern world is saturated with debauchery and decadence. However, evildoers and their evil practices are only temporary. When Christ returns, He will stop this world’s evil and set all things right. We can trust that He will bring all present powers under His authority.

**Dear Lord,** help us to remember that one day You will put an end to evil and will establish righteousness. Amen.

## Corruption to Incorruption

**Death is swallowed up in victory** (1 Corinthians 15:54, *KJV*).

**Scripture:** 1 Corinthians 15:50-58

**Song:** “Rise from Your Graves, Ye Dead”

In *The Hiding Place*, Corrie ten Boom recalled her harrowing experience in a Nazi concentration camp. Corrie’s sister, Betsy, knew the end of World War II would eventually come, and she dreamed of opening a rehabilitation home for people whose lives had been destroyed by the war. Although Betsy died in the camp, at end of the war Corrie was approached by the director of a relief organization in Germany and asked about beginning just such a work. The building for the home had already been secured—a former concentration camp. A place once used for dark, evil purposes would now shine with the light of Christ. Where there had been torture, there would be healing.

The apostle Paul reminded the Corinthian believers that their service to God was not in vain. Although death and decay were all around, that was not the end for Christians. Christ would return, and believers’ bodies would be changed in a moment—the corruption of their flesh would be changed into the incorruption of glorious new bodies. Paul wanted this to be a motivation for the Corinthians to continue faithfully serving the Lord.

Today we see the same human decay as in the first century. Sickness, weakness, and death take hold of everyone eventually. But we can trust that when Christ returns, He will transform our corrupted mortal bodies into glorious immortal ones. This gives us motivation to serve Christ and look for His appearing.

**Dear Lord,** thank You for reminding us that You will one day change our corrupted bodies into glorious ones. By the hope we have in You, amen.