

# Lenten devotionals: day 32

Hear the words of comfort

## John 3:16 New International Version (NIV)

*<sup>16</sup> 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.*

Often expressed as the whole message of the Bible in a nutshell this is probably the most quoted/known verse.

It certainly does capture the essence of the creed

### **We believe:**

God: the three together loved the world that was created. Loved it in its perfection and saw that it was good. Loved it more and actively in its imperfection and initiated the restoration plan.

**He: God the father**, almighty one, Jehovah (English translation) gave the son, Jesus Christ. The spoken word of God, that became as man, taking on the earthly, human form. Born in humble beginnings, a man on a mission to provide the way back to life.

**We believe that the son** lived on this earth, paid the necessary sacrifice for all the wrongs in this world once and for all, so that as forgiven, spirit filled people we can have

**Eternity:** the life of being sons of God, heir to the throne.

*And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. Romans 8:11*

I like the extended explanation that Phillips gives

All who follow the leading of God's Spirit are God's own sons. Nor are you meant to relapse into the old slavish attitude of fear—you have been adopted into the very family circle of God and you can say with a full heart, "Father, my Father". The Spirit himself endorses our inward conviction that we really are the children of God. Think what that means. If we are his children we share his treasures, and all that Christ claims as his will belong to all of us as well! Yes, if we share in his suffering we shall certainly share in his glory.

We may repeat these words of comfort on a Sunday, sharing them with those around us that also believe.

Do we also believe them enough on Monday, as we share our life with others who may not believe. Do we believe enough and love enough to live our lives allowing the spirit to stir within us to demonstrate God's love to the world?

Go in peace to love and serve your Lord.

Go on your way, rejoicing. Have a wonderful weekend

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## Lenten devotional: day 31

*"At any given moment, within a certain undefinable radius of your sorry body or soul, there will be something that can lift you. The trick is knowing where to look."*

*If I die before i wake*  
*Emily Koch*

The above quote is taken from the book I am presently reading. To put it in , the words are spoken in the mind of the main character of the book. He is hospitalised after a climbing accident, lying in an induced coma. As he lies there, he recognises his visitors, longing to communicate with them but frustrated because they cannot grasp that he is hearing their conversation. He brings us into his world, sharing the little acts of kindness that bring him relief. The depth of meaning within that sentence has been with me all day. How many times have we been in need of a lift, not knowing to whom or where to turn?

## Jesus gives us words of comfort.

These are regularly used in many church services. To continue extending our creed studies in keeping with the season, they will feature during the next few posts.

Hear what comfortable words our Savior Christ speaks to all who truly turn to him.”

*Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.” Matthew 11:28-30*

Jesus comforts us, but he also demands action.

**Come:** He will never enforce himself upon us. If we want the rest that he promises, we have to bring our problems, our grief, our desires before him. The person weary of carrying fear, disappointment, loss and sorrow, must actively give them up to Jesus.

**Take:** why does Jesus promise comfort and rest by asking us to take up his yoke? With the sacrifice Jesus bore for us, the yoke of the old law ended. Jesus is the perfect sacrifice. Now we live under his grace rather than the binding rules and regulations of the law. He has paid the dues in full and His love and gentleness offers respite from the cares of the world.

**Learn:** Jesus lived as man in this world. He has been tempted as we are and experienced loss and pain and death, when even his closest friends turned away from him.

When we face betrayal, can we learn to say, forgive them?

When we lose friends, family, those that are dear to us, can we say, Lord, I believe and trust you.

Even in despair, can we look at the cross and shout, Father, your will be done?

Connect tomorrow for more words of comfort.

Connect today by sharing your faith.

In peace and love.

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## **Lenten devotionals: day 27**

For our weekly round up, I chose this Psalm.

In Matthew 26:38 Jesus says, “My soul is sorrowful even to the point of death,” perhaps quoting from this Psalm.

Just prior to this, after celebrating Passover with His disciples and giving them a new feast of remembrance, as was the custom, Jesus and the disciples sang a hymn.

Music raises the spirit and is a natural release of praise and gratitude as well as calming a troubled soul.

This Psalm, has always been one of my ‘go to’ Psalms. I find in it both comfort and hope. Comfort knowing that Jesus, too, felt sorrow, grief and pain. Hope, because in the midst of trouble, God is our rock, our stability and our future.

## **Psalm 42**<sup>[a][b]</sup>

**For the director of music. A *maskil*<sup>[c]</sup> of the Sons of Korah.**

<sup>1</sup> As the deer pants for streams of water,  
so my soul pants for you, my God.

<sup>2</sup> My soul thirsts for God, for the living God.  
When can I go and meet with God?

<sup>3</sup> My tears have been my food  
day and night,  
while people say to me all day long,  
“Where is your God?”

<sup>4</sup> These things I remember

as I pour out my soul:  
how I used to go to the house of God  
under the protection of the Mighty One<sup>[d]</sup>  
with shouts of joy and praise  
among the festive throng.

<sup>5</sup> Why, my soul, are you downcast?  
Why so disturbed within me?  
Put your hope in God,  
for I will yet praise him,  
my Savior and my God.

<sup>6</sup> My soul is downcast within me;  
therefore I will remember you  
from the land of the Jordan,  
the heights of Hermon—from Mount Mizar.

<sup>7</sup> Deep calls to deep  
in the roar of your waterfalls;  
all your waves and breakers  
have swept over me.

<sup>8</sup> By day the Lord directs his love,  
at night his song is with me—  
a prayer to the God of my life.

<sup>9</sup> I say to God my Rock,  
“Why have you forgotten me?  
Why must I go about mourning,  
oppressed by the enemy?”

<sup>10</sup> My bones suffer mortal agony

as my foes taunt me,  
saying to me all day long,  
"Where is your God?"

<sup>11</sup> *Why, my soul, are you downcast?  
Why so disturbed within me?  
Put your hope in God,  
for I will yet praise him,  
my Savior and my God.*

Have a wonderful weekend everyone.

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## **Lenten devotionals: day 26**

I believe in life everlasting...

*John 17:3 (TYN) This is lyfe eternall that they myght knowe the(e) that only very God and whom thou hast sent Iesus Christ.*

Reading this Tyndale version of John 17 gave me a fresh view of the verse.

Here Jesus reminds us that God, all three, exists outside of time. Eternity is, was and shall be. When we accept the gift

of life through the redemption of Christ we become independent of time. Plainly speaking our eternal life is now, was before sin and will be in each moment.

I hope that you are reading this in your quiet space. Stop. Be still. Focus. This may be scary, but become outside of time. There is no regret, lamb of God, paid the debt. There is no care or worry for tomorrow. Abba, father, provides. There is only now. Energy, strength, hope, love and faith, spirit filled life.

Are you thirsty? Drink the cup of salvation

Are you hungry? Feed on the bread of life.

Are you tired? Rest in the promise, "come unto me, "

*Then shall the young women rejoice in the dance,  
and the young men and the old shall be merry.  
I will turn their mourning into joy;  
I will comfort them, and give them gladness for sorrow.*

<sup>14</sup> *I will feast the soul of the priests with abundance,  
and my people shall be satisfied with my goodness,  
declares the Lord." Jeremiah 31:13-14*

Take as long as you need in quiet meditation. Open your heart, ears, soul to the eternal and feel the strength. Empty yourself of all but love and absorb the enormity and [silence of eternity.](#)

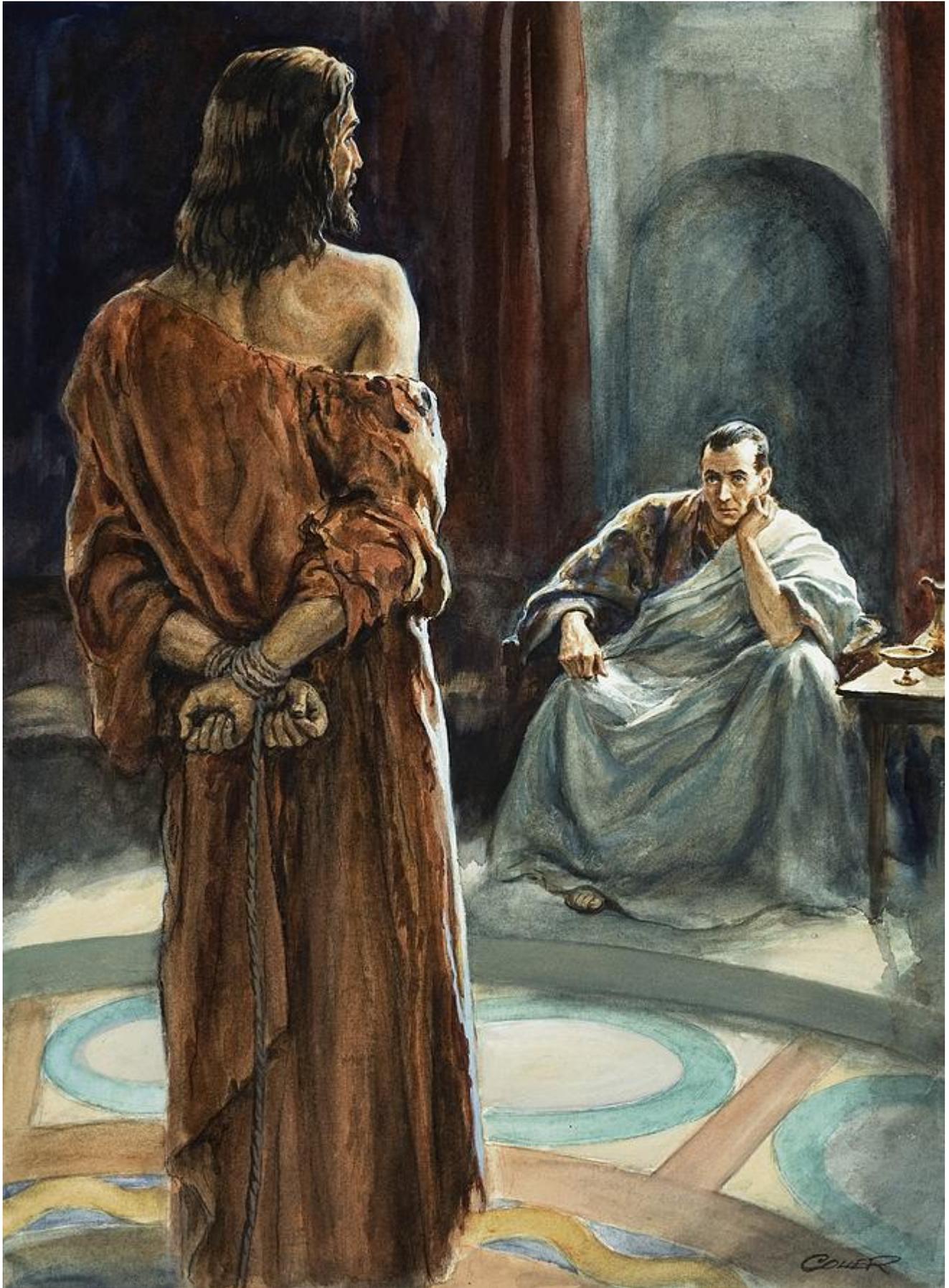
Turn the sound down or even off for 5 minutes silent meditation.

Go in peace.

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## **Lenten devotional: day 15**

As a pause for reflection today recite the whole creed, apostolic or nicene whichever is your preference and allow God to speak through the images below or your favourite art work.



Christ before Pilate



The Lord bless you and keep you, make his face to shine upon you and grant you peace.

Share the peace with someone today.

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## Lenten devotions: day 14

I believe Jesus suffered under Pontius Pilate.

**Pilate:** Upon what charge do you bring this man here?

It is early morning. Outside the palace a crowd lingers. Then Pilate appears. A masterful and imposing figure he looks down on those gathered outside the gate.

**Crowd:** He is a criminal, otherwise we would not have brought him to you.

**Pilate:** Have you no law in which to charge him? Take him away and deal with him yourself.

**Crowd:** But we cannot have him executed under our law.

Pilate returns back inside and has Jesus brought to him.

**Pilate:** Are you the king of the Jews?

**Jesus:** My kingdom is not of this world. If it were you would have no power over me.

**Pilate:** So you are a king then?

**Jesus:** So you say. I tell you that my purpose in this world is to testify to the truth. All who know the truth listen to me.

**Pilate:** What is truth?

**What is truth?**

*Truth is an understanding of right.*

Truth is undeniable.

Truth is based on trust.

Truth is feared by those who live in ignorance.

Truth is revered by those who seek mercy and justice.

Truth is light.

Truth is a hard task master but the reward is great.

Truth is eternal.

What say you?

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## **Lenten devotions: day 13**

I believe in God, the Father almighty,  
creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,  
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit  
and born of the virgin Mary.

He suffered under Pontius Pilate.

Why do I believe that Jesus suffered in those days before his actual crucifixion? Why is this important as part of the redemption and sanctification process? What part was Pilate playing in this ultimate triumph over sin and death?

It is John's account of these last days that gives us the most complete insight into Pilate's character and responsibility.

Prior to being brought before Pilate Jesus had already suffered.

**He suffered, in the garden.** Separating himself from the disciples, he spent time alone with His father. Even whilst praying for release from this final mission, He also knew that there was no other way. It was His physical, earthly body that struggled, but it must also have been the emotional and spiritual strain of having to face it alone. There had to be a death, which for him had to be separation from the Godhead.

**He suffered the betrayal of his closest friends.** One of whom traded his life for a mere 30 pieces of silver. Greed for material things for that moment was more precious than the life of another.

For the other, it was fear. Fear of being recognised, fear of being counted as a follower of Jesus, fear for his own safety

was stronger than his love for another.

**He suffered betrayal from the spiritual leaders.** Those who once were amazed at his teaching now valued their own position and standing. Their puffed up opinion of their own importance was more important than recognising the promised Messiah.

**He suffered abuse.** When being questioned about His teaching, a soldier grew angry and struck Jesus. A misplaced loyalty allowed anger to prevail and was more important than understanding.

When even those who should have stood by Jesus betrayed him, it does not seem likely that Pilate will show the strength of character to bring about justice, indeed is not his first response when Jesus is brought before him to immediately dismiss the case requesting that they deal with the charge under their own law. Indifference and unwillingness to ,”rock the boat,” and go against the people was more important than doing the right thing.

Lord I remember times when I too have betrayed you. Times when I have served myself and betrayed the trust you placed in me to do your work. Times when I have sought my own desires instead of taking care of others. Times when I have let pride stand in the way of charity and forgiveness. Times when I have allowed anger to cause hurt and pain to others. Each of these were laid on your shoulders when you took the road of salvation. Lord, forgive my sins of omission, of commission and of ignorance through the power of the sacrifice you made.

I believe in the gospel, good news, of salvation in Christ.

What do you believe?

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## **Lenten devotions: day 12**

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,  
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.  
He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit  
and born of the Virgin Mary.**

Mary, a young woman, betrothed to a carpenter is busy working

in the house. She hums to herself and happily thinks of her husband to be, Joseph. She quietly, in her own way, offers silent but heartfelt thanks to God for blessing her with this strong man who will support her and be faithful to her.

Suddenly, she senses another presence in the room. She turns, expecting it to be one of her family, but it is a stranger.

Angel of the Lord: Greetings, you who are favoured of the Lord.

Mary: Sir, who are you and what does this mean?

Angel of the Lord: Do not be afraid Mary. You have found favour with God and have been chosen to carry His child. This child will be born onto you and you will call his name Jesus. He will be great and will take the throne of David and his will be an eternal kingdom.

Mary: How will this be as I am a virgin?

Angel of the Lord: The holy spirit will be with you and the seed will be from He who is almighty. Therefore He will be called the Son of God. Also, your cousin, Elizabeth, is also with child in her older years. She will be a comfort and support for you.

Mary: I am the servant of the Lord. May it be as you have told me.

So began a wonderful relationship of Mother and son. Throughout the gospel records we see Mary as the gentle mother nurturing, guiding and supporting the baby who grew, was blessed by others and studied the sacred writings and the law to the amazement of the teachers. She had quiet confidence in his power, telling others to trust him and carry out his instructions. She watched as he became popular with the people, wanting to listen to his teaching, and perform great miracles. Finally, she was there to witness his suffering and know his great love for her by requesting his beloved disciple, John, to become her son, when He could no longer fulfill that role. Her grief must have been intolerable, but she remained firm in her confidence in the power of God, that her son would be Lord over even death itself.

Lord I believe that you became human, descending from heaven and living as ourselves, human with the same human weaknesses as ourselves but overcoming even a cruel death and separation from God father figure, so that the perfect sacrifice could be made once for all. Today may I learn again from your earth mother to have faith in your power, to trust you with my life, to respect and follow your instructions and weep at your suffering but rejoice in the power over death, looking to the glorious resurrection we all will experience in the last day. Lord, I believe, take my doubts and anxieties and turn them to strength and commitment. So be it.

Dear readers may you be blessed this Lenten period and enjoy a closer relationship with our God and saviour.

Share your own thoughts and experience of God's presence in your life in the comments.

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# Lenten devotions: Day 11

I believe in God, the Father almighty,  
creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,  
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit  
and born of the virgin Mary.

For Jesus to become Emmanuel, God with us in human form, he had to be born of a woman. This birth had been foretold in prophecies for many years.

*Isaiah 7:14 Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and she will call Him ...*

*<https://biblehub.com> > isaiah*

The woman whom God chose was a humble young girl, promised to a tradesman, but not yet in an intimate relationship. She would have known of these prophecies and perhaps even have wondered what it would feel like to be, “the chosen one”.

For today, I have chosen to just enjoy Mary’s proclamation of faith and devotion to her Lord, in the text of what we now

commonly call the Magnificat.

## **Luke 1:46-55 New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)**

### **Mary's Song of Praise**

<sup>46</sup> *And Mary<sup>[a]</sup> said,*

*"My soul magnifies the Lord,*

<sup>47</sup> *and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,*

<sup>48</sup> *for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant.  
Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed;*

<sup>49</sup> *for the Mighty One has done great things for me,  
and holy is his name.*

<sup>50</sup> *His mercy is for those who fear him  
from generation to generation.*

<sup>51</sup> *He has shown strength with his arm;  
he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their  
hearts.*

<sup>52</sup> *He has brought down the powerful from their thrones,  
and lifted up the lowly;*

<sup>53</sup> *he has filled the hungry with good things,  
and sent the rich away empty.*

<sup>54</sup> *He has helped his servant Israel,  
in remembrance of his mercy,*

<sup>55</sup> *according to the promise he made to our ancestors,  
to Abraham and to his descendants forever."*

Are we as willing to hear the call from God and answer

, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord". [Luke 1:38](#)

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## **Lenten devotions: day 8**

**I believe in God, the Father Almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth;**

**And in Jesus Christ his only Son, our Lord;**

It is one thing to believe in God and acknowledge Him as creator of our world.

It is one thing to believe in the man Jesus who lived at one time on this earth.

It is a greater thing to believe that this man Jesus comes from God, is part of God and is able to deliver us promising salvation.

Can I now state that this Jesus, this part of the God Head,

this saviour is also my Lord?

*Definition:* one having power or authority

a ruler

one having land or property

one who has mastery or leadership in some area of expertise.

All of the above refer to lord using lowercase. Merriam Webster assures me that capitalised Lord refers to God and Jesus.

Recalling instances in Jesus' life recognise places where he demonstrates lordship in power, rule, authority. Witnesses to his life recognised authority in his teaching and mastery of the law in addition to his power and ability to heal.

**His reputation often went before him;**

A leper wanting to be made clean, states, "*Lord, if you will, you can make me clean.*"

A Canaanite woman wanting healing for her daughter, pleads, "*Have mercy on me O Lord, son of David*"

And Zacchaeus, recognising the need for redemptive healing, promises, *“Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor.”*

**In His miracles Jesus demonstrates mastery over creation.**

The Lord of the earth has no problem in turning water into wine, controlling the storm and walking on water. He is able to heal the body, the mind and even bring life to the dead.

**The final victory over death.**

Witness the resurrection of Christ through Mary’s eyes.

What made her stay behind at the tomb when the others left? In her grief she checked again, “was the tomb really empty? Had they missed something?” She listened as the angels wondered why she was weeping. She longed for her Lord, even in death, to honour Him and care for Him as the laws demanded.

Turning away from the tomb, she saw someone whom she supposed to be the gardener.

*“Tell me where He is, sir, so that I can honour him.”*

Then he spoke to Her, **“Mary”**.

It took just the speaking of her name for her to recognise

Him.

Without true understanding she recognised him with the title "Rabboni or Master".

Later she told the other disciples, "*I have seen the Lord*".

Let us follow Mary and choose to faithfully step out and acknowledge that Jesus, is our Lord.

Lord have charge over my physical welfare as I seek to become a good steward of the blessings you pour out to me.

Lord direct my life, gently leading me as I make decisions and walk in faith each and every day.

Lord I rejoice in Your presence and tell of your faithfulness.

Lord you ask for commitment and loyalty and dedication.

Lord you ask for me.

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