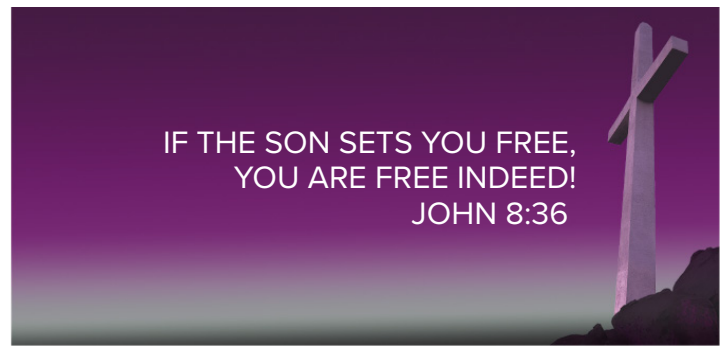


Jesus IOI

“Grace Thoughts”



A short devotional to help get you excited about Jesus!

"Do you suppose that those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them were worse culprits than all the men who live in Jerusalem?" —Luke 13:4

I had just started as an associate minister in a church when the worst terrorist attack on the United States occurred on September 11, 2001. I was in the office, wondering why no one else was showing up for our staff meeting. On the phone someone told me about the tragedy that was unfolding. The next weekend, we were all expectant for what the senior pastor would be preaching about, and I will never forget the topic of the sermon. He preached from the above-mentioned text.

As many still do now, ancient Jewish culture interpreted adversity and misfortune as direct judgment from God upon the most sinful (see John 9:1, 2). When a report was brought to Jesus regarding Galileans “whose blood Pilate had mixed with their sacrifices” (Luke 13:1), which is consistent with Pilate’s clashing relationship with the Jews, Jesus called attention to the fact that all human beings are sinful and in need of repentance. He argued that just because these Galileans suffered this way, they were not greater sinners than others (see Luke 13:2). In the event that follows, Jesus also dismissed the interpretation that those who were victims of the falling of the Tower of Siloam (probably at the southeast corner of the Jerusalem walls), were worse people than the others who lived in Jerusalem. Jesus concludes on both events with the same admonition: “I tell you, no, but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish” (verses 3, 5). The use of the word all in every verse of His answers shows the generalization of the sinful condition (verses 2, 3, 4, 5). Jesus speaks against assigning degrees of sinfulness according to the level of tragedy and warns against self-approval and considering oneself better than others. Jesus makes it clear that we are all sinners in need of repentance. We all need a Savior. Our only two choices are perishing or believing in the One who perished in our place. Jesus wins! And we can choose His victory on our behalf. “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus” (Romans 3:23, 24).