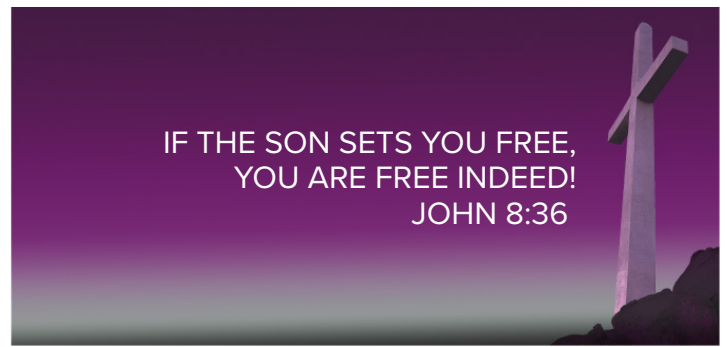


Jesus IOI

“Grace Thoughts”



A short devotional to help get you excited about Jesus!

“Thus it is written . . . that repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem.” —Luke 24:46, 47

Living in a desert area, I have several types of cacti in my backyard. These are very dear to me because they belonged to my mother. The flowers they produce are so gorgeous and colorful, that year after year they take me by surprise. Some cacti produce very large, showy flowers; others bloom with many tiny ones. All of them lovely and breathtaking! It is hard to grasp how these rough-looking, leafless plants with spiny stems are capable of producing such flamboyant beauty. These cacti give me hope that God can use my life for His glory.

After His resurrection, Jesus explained to His disciples what the Scriptures said about Him (Luke 24:45). Jesus said: “Thus it is written, that the Christ would suffer and rise again from the dead the third day, and that repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in His name to all the nations. . . . You are witnesses of these things” (Luke 24:46-48). Jesus clearly told the disciples the core proclamation of the Christian church: *forgiveness of sins in His name*. They were His witnesses and His messengers to proclaim the good news. But if we look closer, we see that they were a rough-looking, ragtag bunch of people. How could they be God’s messengers to a needy world? The followers of Jesus included angry fishermen, violent rebels, a despised businessman, and a woman of shady reputation. They were definitely rough-looking cacti with spiny stems. How could they possibly fulfill their calling to be messengers of forgiveness for their generation? So glad you asked! The grace of Jesus took over their lives, and they were promised power from on high through the Holy Spirit (Luke 24:49). And that’s how we find them in Acts 2, when they were baptized with the Holy Spirit, and the desert bloomed and filled the earth with colorful flowers. Let’s ask God for the power of His Spirit to fulfill our calling to proclaim the gospel to our generation. For, “we have this treasure in earthen vessels, so that the surpassing greatness of the power will be of God and not from ourselves” (2 Corinthians 4:7).