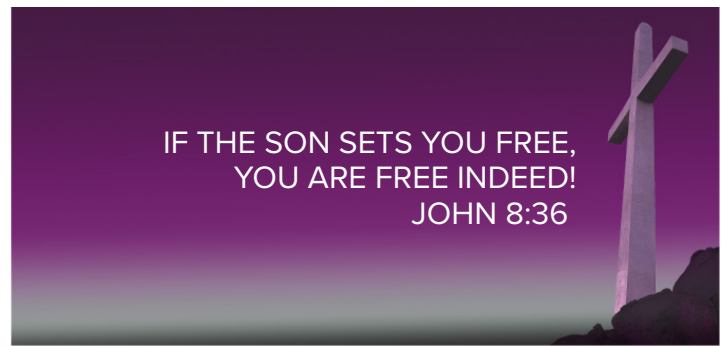


# Jesus IOI

## “Grace Thoughts”



A short devotional to help get you excited about Jesus!

*“How often I wanted to gather your children together, the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were unwilling.” —Matthew 23:37*

When I was a little girl, I couldn't have dogs or cats as pets due to my asthma. We lived in the city, yet we had a good-sized backyard, so my parents got me a colorful pygmy hen and a rooster. Soon I was excitedly expecting little chicks that were about to hatch. About that time, we experienced a strong and long storm. The hen, with her motherly instincts, tried so hard to save her eggs in the chicken coop, yet the weather affected the development of the chicks and only one survived. She then focused all her tender care on that one. It was beautiful to watch!

In one of the most tender visualizations of God's efforts to save His children, Jesus uttered a heartfelt lament: “Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were unwilling” (Matthew 23:37). Jesus had previously exposed the Pharisees and scribes for killing the prophets (verses 29-32), and now He laments over the whole city. This longing of Jesus to reach those who were refusing God's plan of salvation, by killing the prophets and stoning the messengers, has touched my heart. The metaphor of His longing is filled with warmth and affection. He wanted to gather the *children* of Jerusalem as a hen gathers her brood. In the words of Donald Hagner: “The image of a mothering bird who gathers her young under her wings suggests such things as security, nurture, and well-being (cf. Ruth 2:12; Psalm 17:8; 36:7; Isaiah 31:5 among many OT examples). In the message of the dawning of the kingdom, this salvation had been offered repeatedly to the Jews.”\* But they were *unwilling*. They chose to reject Him. The reason why this passage brings me assurance is that in the words of Jesus, I find a glimpse of how God views us. Not only is He always ready to reach out to us, but He actually *longs* for us to become willing to be saved. He longs to place you under His redemptive wings. Are you willing?

\* Donald A. Hagner, Matthew 14-28, World Biblical Commentary, vol. 33b (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, Inc., 1995), 680.