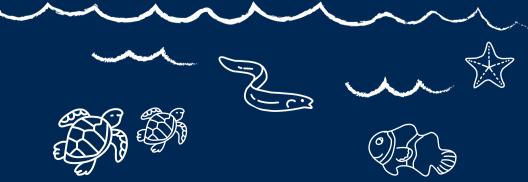
# JESUS IS • • • CONVERGE APRIL DEVOTIONAL 2024



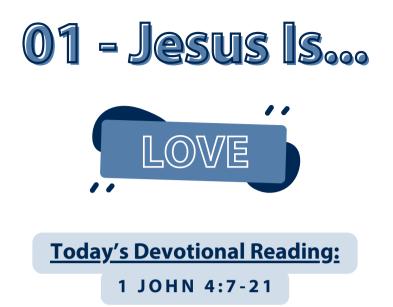












Scripture makes it clear that Jesus is love in its purest form. As the author of 1 John puts it, "God is love, and the one who remains in love remains in God, and God remains in him" (1 John 4:16b CSB).

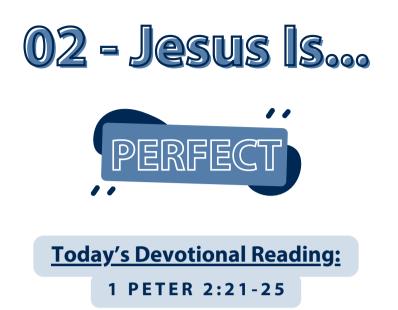
Throughout his earthly ministry, Jesus made it a point to love those around him however he could. He healed the sick, clothed the needy, fed the hungry, welcomed the lost, restored the broken, freed the captives, and so much more. Time and time again, Jesus demonstrated the love of God that reaches beyond all things.

Jesus is love as it is meant to be: pure, complete, and without limit.

As lovers of Jesus, we are called to be love in the same way. We should care for those around us, seek to serve where we can, and welcome others in genuine kindness.

How does today's devotion grow your knowledge of Jesus?

How will you show others the love of Christ today?



When Jesus came and lived on the earth, he faced all the same trials and temptations of sin that you and I face today. Jesus felt the pull to lie, to disobey his parents, to say or do something out of anger, to take what wasn't his, and so on.

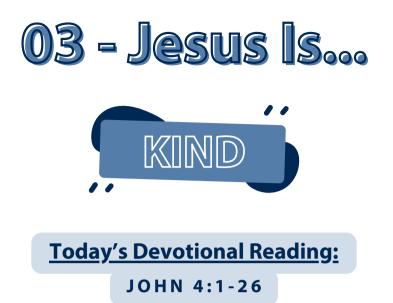
Because Jesus was fully human, he knew what it was to be tempted to sin and turn away from God. However, because Jesus was also fully God, he remained faithful and did not fall into sin, choosing instead to obey his Father in Heaven.

Jesus lived a perfect life, completely without sin or error. 1 Peter 2:22 affirms this as it says, "He did not commit sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth" (CSB).

It is because Jesus lived a perfect life, died a sinner's death, and rose again that we are saved by his grace when we believe in him.

How does today's devotion grow your knowledge of Jesus?

How do you feel knowing Jesus faced and resisted temptation?



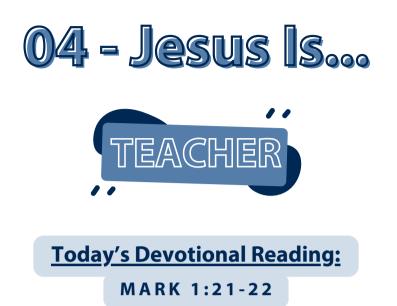
In the story of John 4, Jesus takes time to talk with a Samaritan woman at Jacob's well in Samaria. Scripture tells us it was about noon when the woman came to draw water from the well, which tells us quite a bit about her.

Typically, all the women would come draw water early in the morning or in the evening when the sun was low to avoid the extreme heat. However, this woman came at noon, the hottest part of the day, to avoid being at the well with other people. This woman was an outcast in her town, often unwelcomed and unwanted.

Yet despite this, Jesus chose to speak with her and offer her eternal life. This woman is the first to hear about Jesus' identity as Savior! Jesus was kind to her, loving and welcoming her even when others didn't. Jesus showed her, and us, what it is be be radically kind.

How does today's devotion grow your knowledge of Jesus?

How will you show others the kindness of Christ today?



Jesus was a teacher like none other in the ancient world. Unlike the Pharisees and Rabbis at the time, Jesus not only knew and truly believed what he was teaching, but he was also equipped with the power and right to teach those around him by the Holy Spirit.

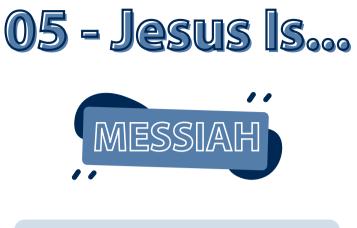
Scripture tells us that people listening to him in a Capernaum synagogue "were astonished at his teaching because he was teaching them <u>as one who had authority</u>, and not like the scribes" (Mark 1:22 CSB).

Authority is defined as "the power or right to give orders, make decisions, and enforce obedience." Jesus did not just tell people stories and give lessons, but he called them to hear his words and live in obedience to them, honoring and serving God as they did so.

Jesus teachings in Scripture hold the same call for us today, too.

How does today's devotion grow your knowledge of Jesus?

How will you let Jesus be your teacher today?



### **Today's Devotional Reading:**

MATTHEW 16:13-20

As Jesus is traveling with his disciples, they come to a place called Caesarea Philippi and Jesus stops for a moment to ask a question: "Who do people say that the Son of Man is" (Matthew 16:13 CSB)?

The disciples respond with a few different answers, suggesting John the Baptist, Elijah, Jeremiah, or one of the other great prophets.

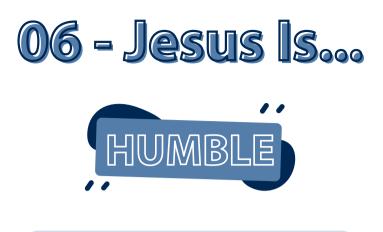
Jesus then changes his question slightly as he asks them again: "But you... Who do <u>you</u> say that I am" (Matthew 16:15 CSB)?

In a bold declaration, Peter answers, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God" (Matthew 16:16 CSB).

"Messiah" is a Hebrew word that means "the anointed one." As Peter declares this in Matthew 16:16, he identifies Jesus as the anointed one, son of the living God, whom Israel had eagerly been waiting for to come and save them as God had promised.

How does today's devotion grow your knowledge of Jesus?

How would you answer if Jesus asked who you say that he is?



## Today's Devotional Reading: PHILIPPIANS 2:5-11

Jesus offers us many examples of how to live, but he especially demonstrates humility for us in his life on earth.

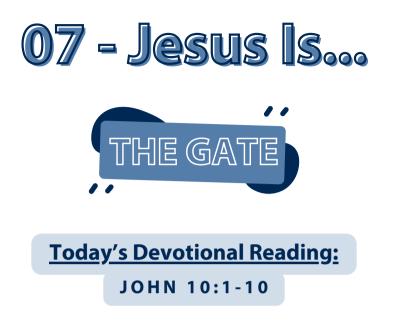
As Paul writes to the Philippian church, he urges them to remember the life and humility of Christ. In a short poem, Paul emphasizes all of Jesus' glory as God, king, and Lord over everything. Yet despite all these traits that show us why Jesus should be praised and served, Paul also focuses on what Jesus chose to do in his life.

Paul writes, "[Even though he was God], he emptied himself by assuming the form of a servant ... [and] he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even to death on a cross" (Philippians 2:7-8 CSB).

Although Jesus had every reason to be worshipped, he chose to be humble and obedient, serving others before himself in every moment.

How does today's devotion grow your knowledge of Jesus?

How can you practice the humility of Christ in your own life?



In John 10, Jesus is talking with the Pharisees as he tries to explain his identity to them. To try and illustrate that he is the Son of God, Jesus uses a well-known example that the Pharisees and others in Jesus' day would have been very familiar with: a sheep pen.

Sheep pens were large circular enclosures made with walls of stone stacked about three feet high. These enclosures only had one gate that was used as the entrance and the exit so that sheep could not come in or go out without first getting by the one guarding the gate.

If someone tried to enter without going through the gate (i.e., climbing over the wall), they were seen as a thief and a robber. By calling himself "the gate," Jesus is saying that he is the one true way into "the sheep pen," that is, the Kingdom of God.

Only through Jesus can we come to know and live with the Father.

How does today's devotion grow your knowledge of Jesus?

Why is it important for us to know that Jesus is "the gate?"



## Today's Devotional Reading:

JOHN 10:11-18

After Jesus has talked with the Pharisees about being the gate, he continues with another "I am" statement that relates to shepherding. Jesus said, "I am the good shepherd."

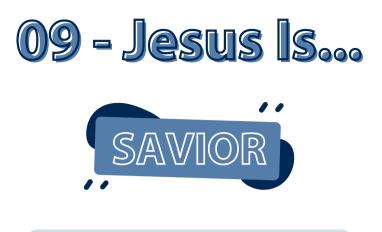
In Jesus' day, the life of a shepherd revolved almost entirely around his flock of sheep. The sheep were a shepherd's most prized possession, so he would guard, protect, and provide for the sheep with everything he had.

It was normal for the shepherd's flock to recognize his voice and come when he called. The bond between a shepherd and his sheep was deep as sheep relied on their shepherd for safety and the shepherd loved and cared for his flock.

Jesus is the good shepherd and we are his sheep. He gives everything to love and provide for us and we can depend on him.

How does today's devotion grow your knowledge of Jesus?

How has Jesus loved and provided for you in your life?



### **Today's Devotional Reading:**

**JOHN 4:27-42** 

In a continuation from Day 3 (Jesus is Kind), the second half of the story follows Jesus' disciples as they return and the woman goes to tell those in her village about Jesus.

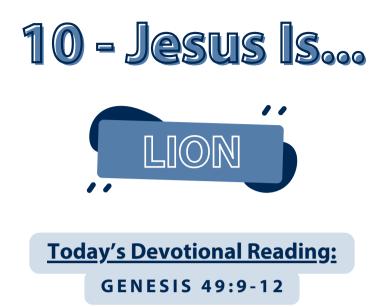
As the woman ran into the village, she began proclaiming, "'Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Messiah'" (John 4:29 CSB)? As soon as the people heard what she was saying, they ran out to meet Jesus and see if it was true.

When the people met Jesus and heard him speak to them, they believed in him. They said, "We have heard for ourselves and know that this really is the Savior of the world" (John 4:42 CSB).

While Jesus' identity as Messiah shows that he is anointed by God, his identity as Savior reveals his purpose: to save those who believe in him from the power of sin and death.

How does today's devotion grow your knowledge of Jesus?

How have you seen Jesus as Savior in your life?



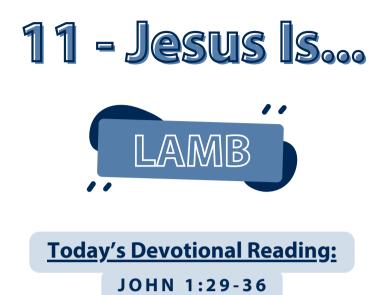
One title that Jesus is called in both the Old and New Testament is "Lion of Judah." This comes from a passage in Genesis where Jacob divides Israel into twelve tribes named after his sons. As he gets to his fourth son, Judah, a special blessing is given. Jesus would come from the tribe of Judah, so this blessing is a prophecy about Jesus' identity as the Lion of Judah.

This passage reflects on the power of a lion: it is a fearsome opponent (v. 9), a strong king among others (v. 10), and a ferocious warrior (vv. 11-12).

These traits are also seen in Jesus. He is overflowing with strength, king over Israel, and the undefeated warrior in the war against sin and death. Jesus is victorious, roaring over death and emerging in glory as he tramples his opponent in triumph.

How does today's devotion grow your knowledge of Jesus?

Listen to "LION" by Elevation Worship and reflect on the lyrics.



The title of Jesus as the Lion of Judah also comes with a counterpart. Just as Jesus is the roaring lion that tramples over sin and grave, he is also the sacrificial lamb who willingly gave himself up so that the sins of man might be forgiven.

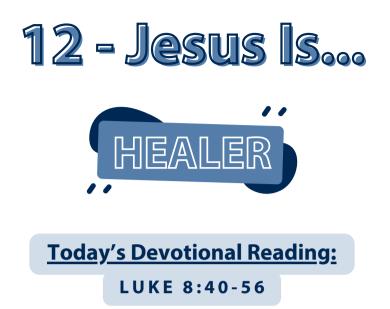
Sin always came with a cost, and the only way it could be forgiven was by a blood sacrifice. In the Old Testament, this was done through animal sacrifice as a blameless, spotless lamb was offered up to cover the sins of the people.

Because Jesus lived a perfect life and was completely obedient to God, he was like this blameless, spotless lamb. Yet he chose to become the ultimate sacrifice for us, dying on the cross so that all our sins could be covered when we believe in him.

Jesus roars over death as the lion, but he first was sacrificed as the lamb.

How does today's devotion grow your knowledge of Jesus?

Listen to "Lamb" by Elevation Worship and reflect on the lyrics.



During his earthly ministry, Jesus healed many people from many different illnesses and ailments. He gave sight to the blind, made the lame walk, cured lifelong diseases, and even raised the dead.

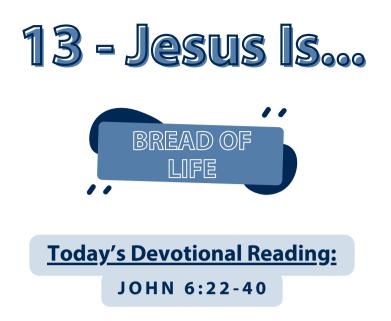
Luke tells us about one of these people in 8:43-48. This woman had been bleeding for twelve years, spent all the money she had on doctors who couldn't heal her, and couldn't go to church because of her sickness. Yet when she reached out and touched Jesus' robe, she was healed! When Jesus discovered her, he said, "Your faith has saved you. Go in peace" (Luke 8:48 CSB).

Jesus heals a young girl only a few verses later, raising her from the dead after her sickness has killed her. All Jesus said to her was, "Child, get up!" (Luke 8:54 CSB) and she was healed!

Jesus was, and still is, the great physician who can mend and heal us.

How does today's devotion grow your knowledge of Jesus?

How do you need Jesus to heal you (mental, emotional, physical)?



After Jesus has performed the miracle of feeding the five thousand, he retreated away for a moment when the people tried to make him king. The next day, the crowd found Jesus again in Capernaum.

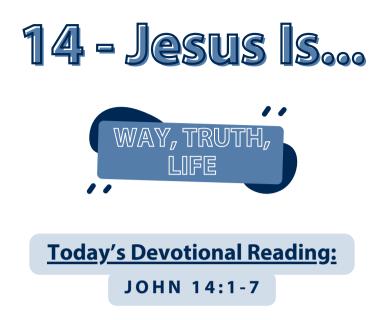
Jesus recognized that these people were only following him because he had given them something (food), so he tried to call them into something deeper: belief in him. He begins by telling them about "the bread from heaven" that gives life to those who eat it.

The people ask for this bread, believing it to be something they can eat. But Jesus replies, "I am the bread of life. No one who comes to me will ever be hungry" (John 6:35 CSB).

Jesus' words mean that he is the only one who can truly satisfy us. No other "bread" can bring us fulfillment that lasts, only satisfaction for a moment that ultimately fades away and leads to hunger.

How does today's devotion grow your knowledge of Jesus?

Have you been seeking other "bread" to fill your hunger?



On Jesus' final night with the disciples, he talked with them about all sorts of things: remaining in him, loving others, grieving with confident hope, and much more. Among these things, Jesus also assured them that he was going away to prepare a place for them.

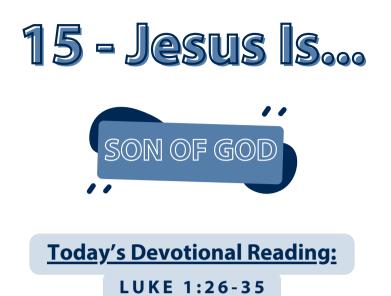
The disciples did not understand what Jesus meant by "going away," and Thomas asked Jesus, "How can we know the way [to where you're going]" (John 14:5 CSB)?

Jesus replied, "I am the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:6 CSB).

In saying this, Jesus revealed that he is the <u>way</u> to God, the <u>truth</u> of salvation, and the giver of eternal <u>life</u>. Besides Jesus, there is no other way, no other truth, and no other life. There is only confusion, deceit, and death.

How does today's devotion grow your knowledge of Jesus?

What does it mean to you that Jesus is the way, truth, and life?



Even before he was born on earth, Jesus' identity as the Son of God was made clear to Mary. When God sent the angel Gabriel to tell Mary that she would carry and give birth to Jesus, Gabriel made sure to declare Jesus' title to her.

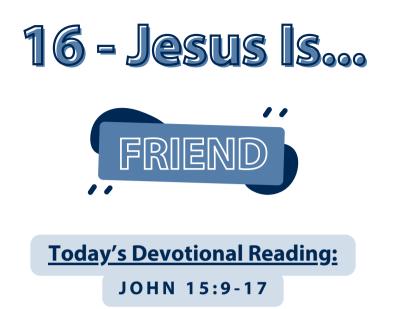
Gabriel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. Therefore, the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God" (Luke 1:35 CSB).

Reading throughout Scripture, people continue to call Jesus by this title in acknowledgment of his power and authority. Because Jesus is the Son of God, he knows God and is able to reveal Him to others.

This is what Jesus' ministry is all about: teaching about God the Father and revealing Him to us on earth so that we might come to believe in Him and be saved from our sins.

How does today's devotion grow your knowledge of Jesus?

Why is it important for us to know that Jesus is the Son of God?



As Jesus sat at the Last Supper with his disciples, he offered encouragement to them that he viewed them as much more than students following him as a teacher - Jesus saw the Twelve as his friends and close companions.

Jesus commands his friends to love others out of the overflow of his love for them. To Jesus, a large part of following him is loving those around us just as he has loved us - without restrictions.

As Jesus did life with the Twelve through his three years of ministry, he witnessed their highs and lows, celebrations and sorrows, fear and anger, and so much more. Jesus knew and loved them wholly as a true and constant friend.

Jesus loves and sees us in the same way today: without restriction, and as treasured companions.

How does today's devotion grow your knowledge of Jesus?

How have you seen Jesus as a friend in your life?



#### **Today's Devotional Reading:**

LEVITICUS 16:21-22, 2 CORINTHIANS 5:21

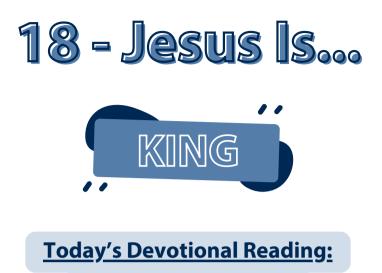
In the Old Testament, the Israelites used a system of ritual sacrifice to cover their sins and receive God's forgiveness. One of these rituals included what is called a scapegoat.

In the Bible, a scapegoat was a goat that the chief priest would release into the wilderness after declaring the sins of the people were upon it. As the goat ran into the wilderness, it symbolically carried away the peoples' sins and made them clean before God.

Jesus represents this idea in the New Testament as he goes to the cross. Although he has done nothing wrong, Jesus has the sins of the people declared upon him and is "sent into the wilderness" by dying on the cross. Like the scapegoat, Jesus' death "carried away" our sins and made us clean before God, restoring our hope for relationship with Him when we believe in Jesus' death and resurrection.

How does today's devotion grow your knowledge of Jesus?

What sins might you need to hand over to Jesus today?



EPHESIANS 1:20-23

Scripture paints a vivid picture of God's rule in heaven. the prophet Isaiah describes the throne room of God (Isaiah 6), the many rooms in his house for those who believe in Jesus (John 14), and the rich inheritance that awaits God's sons and daughters through faith in Christ (Ephesians 1).

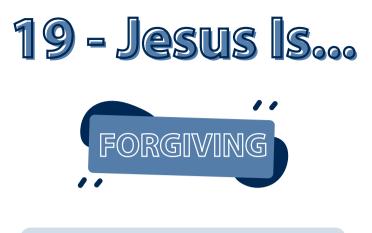
Because the glory of God's reign is emphasized, it also reveals that Jesus, who is the begotten Son of God, holds a royal seat alongside God the Father in heaven.

Paul writes in Ephesians, "[God seated Jesus] at his right hand in the heavens, far above every ruler and authority power and dominion, and every title given, not only in this age but also in the one to come" (1:21 CSB).

God has declared Jesus king over everything, both now and forever.

How does today's devotion grow your knowledge of Jesus?

What can you make Jesus the king of in your life today?



#### **Today's Devotional Reading:**

MATTHEW 18:21-35

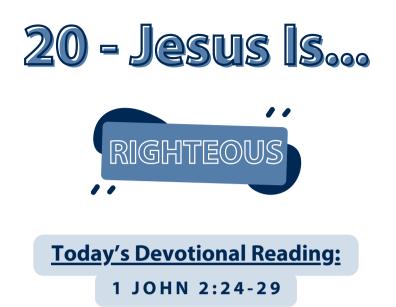
During Jesus' ministry, he was often asked many questions by many people and typically responded with parables; so when he was asked by his disciple Peter about forgiveness, it was no surprise that Jesus answered with a story.

Jesus told the parable of the unforgiving servant, in which a king's servant is forgiven of a great debt to the king, yet fails to forgive a fellow servant of a small debt due to him. As a result of his hypocrisy, the unforgiving servant is thrown in prison until he can repay the debt he originally owed the king.

Jesus uses this story to show that like the king, God has forgiven us of a great debt: our sin. Because of this forgiveness, we must be careful not to be like the unforgiving servant, failing to extend the same grace we have received. Just as Jesus forgave us, so should we forgive others.

How does today's devotion grow your knowledge of Jesus?

Who might you need to forgive today?



Throughout Jesus' life, he was obedient to God and remained faithful to His will. Jesus followed the Jewish laws and customs, never sinning and always doing the right thing.

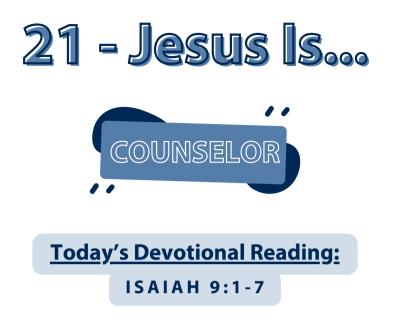
Even though Jesus was certainly faced with trials and temptations, he never swayed from living a holy life that honored and sought after God. Jesus was righteous and set an example for his followers.

To be righteous means "to be morally right or virtuous," meaning you choose to do the good over evil and to serve God over yourself.

When we truly know Jesus, we will start to follow his example and live righteously as a result. John writes in 1 John 2:29, "If you know that [Jesus] is righteous, you know this as well: Everyone who does what is right has been born of him" (CSB).

How does today's devotion grow your knowledge of Jesus?

What can you do to show the righteousness of Christ today?



In Isaiah 9:1-7, the prophet Isaiah thinks upon the coming Messiah, the long-awaited Savior of the Jews. As he talks about the Messiah, he focuses on the hope and promise that he will bring to his people Israel when he comes.

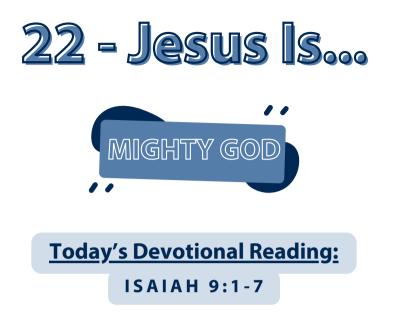
Isaiah calls this Messiah by several names as he contemplates what the Savior will do for his people. One of these names is found at the end of verse 6: "Wonderful Counselor."

Isaiah knew the coming Messiah, that is, Jesus, would be a counselor and comfort to those who called on him. Jesus is a savior who listens and sits with us in every season. He holds us when we grieve, celebrates with us when rejoice, assures us when we fear, and more.

Jesus is a savior who hears, sees, and loves us for all we are.

How does today's devotion grow your knowledge of Jesus?

How can Jesus be your "Wonderful Counselor" today?



In Isaiah 9:1-7, the prophet Isaiah thinks upon the coming Messiah, the long-awaited Savior of the Jews. As he talks about the Messiah, he focuses on the hope and promise that he will bring to his people Israel when he comes.

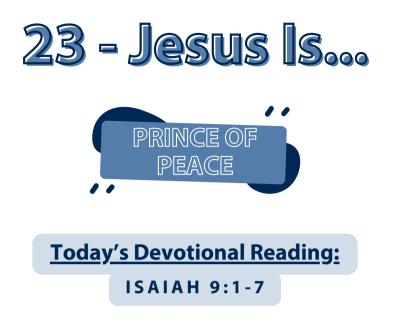
Isaiah calls this Messiah by several names as he contemplates what the Savior will do for his people. One of these names is found at the end of verse 6: "Mighty God."

This title affirms Jesus' identity as part of the Holy Trinity of Father, Son, and Spirit. Jesus is fully God, just as he is fully human. Jesus is filled with the same power and authority as the Father in heaven. He reigns and rules over everything on heaven and earth, now and forever, and nothing will overcome him.

Jesus is the all-powerful, almighty, victorious God of all.

How does today's devotion grow your knowledge of Jesus?

How can Jesus be your "Mighty God" today?



In Isaiah 9:1-7, the prophet Isaiah thinks upon the coming Messiah, the long-awaited Savior of the Jews. As he talks about the Messiah, he focuses on the hope and promise that he will bring to his people Israel when he comes.

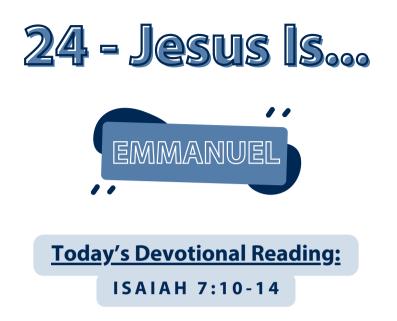
Isaiah calls this Messiah by several names as he contemplates what the Savior will do for his people. One of these names is found at the end of verse 6: "Prince of Peace."

Jesus rules over a kingdom of peace, victory love, and security. There is no room for chaos, confusion, fear, or sorrow in Jesus' kingdom. He is the righteous king of beauty and breakthrough, and he gives abundantly good things to those who seek him.

As the Prince of Peace, Jesus can calm the storms of our lives and offer his divine peace in any situation.

How does today's devotion grow your knowledge of Jesus?

How can Jesus be your "Prince of Peace" today?



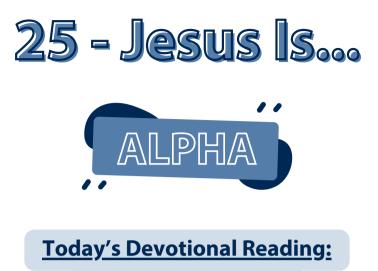
During the time of the prophet Isaiah, a war was raging against Israel and their king, Ahaz, was worried for the safety of his kingdom. Isaiah promised Ahaz that the Lord was with them and told him to ask for a sign from the Lord. Ahaz refused to ask, so the Lord gave one himself: that a virgin would conceive and give birth to a child, and she would name him Emmanuel, which means "God with us."

Isaiah 7:14 is a commonly quoted verse people use when referring to Jesus because it includes the word "Emmanuel." While Isaiah's prophecy here didn't mean to allude to Jesus at first (it actually referred to Isaiah's son), it most certainly hints at Jesus' birth.

Jesus was born of the virgin Mary through the Holy Spirit, and he was called Emmanuel. Jesus being born as a human made him God in the flesh, which literally made him God with us on earth!

How does today's devotion grow your knowledge of Jesus?

How does it encourage you to know that God is with you?



#### **REVELATION 1:4-8**

At the beginning of Revelation, John (the author) shares with his readers how Jesus appeared to him in a vision and what he said.

John quotes Jesus as saying, "'I am the Alpha and the Omega, the one who is, who was, and who is to come, the Almighty" (Revelation 1:8 CSB). For this devotional, we will focus on the first part of that statement: "I am the Alpha."

In Greek, the language of the New Testament, the first letter of the alphabet is called "alpha," which is the Greek version of the letter 'A.' In saying that he is the Alpha, Jesus is saying he is the beginning of all things. Everything starts with him, just like the alphabet begins with 'A.' This statement is the <u>first</u> thing that Jesus says in Revelation!

Jesus is the Alpha, and all things that are good <u>must</u> begin with him.

How does today's devotion grow your knowledge of Jesus?

How can you learn to start things with Jesus each day?



# Today's Devotional Reading: REVELATION 22:12-13

As the book of Revelation comes to a close in chapter 22, John finishes his letter with words from Jesus, just as he started it.

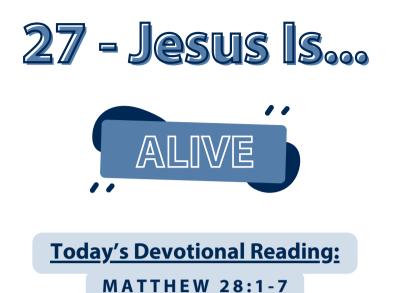
John quotes Jesus as saying, "'I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end'" (Revelation 22:13 CSB). For this devotional, we will focus on the second half of this statement: "I am the Omega."

In Greek, the language of the New Testament, the last letter of the alphabet is called "omega," which is one of the Greek versions of the letter "O." In saying that he is the Omega, Jesus is saying he is the end of all things. Just as everything begins with him ("Alpha"), so should everything end with him too. This is <u>one of the last</u> things Jesus says in Revelation!

Jesus is the Omega, and all things that are good must end with him.

How does today's devotion grow your knowledge of Jesus?

How can you learn to end things with Jesus each day?



After Jesus' death on the cross took place in Matthew 27, things felt incredibly hopeless for the twelve disciples and others that followed Jesus as their teacher. Many hid in fear of being executed like Jesus, some ran, and all mourned the loss of who they believed was the Savior.

On Sunday morning, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb where Jesus was kept to prepare his body with perfumes and flowers. Yet when she arrived, she found the stone rolled away and the body of Jesus missing

An angel was sitting on top of the rolled stone. He said to her, "'Don't be afraid, because I know you are looking for Jesus who was crucified. He is not here. For he has risen, just as he said'" (Matthew 28:5-6 CSB).

Mary ran to tell the disciples. Jesus had conquered sin and grave and risen from the dead! Jesus is alive, and because of his victory, we can live in his freedom when we believe in his sacrifice and resurrection.

How does today's devotion grow your knowledge of Jesus?

How does Jesus being alive change things for us?



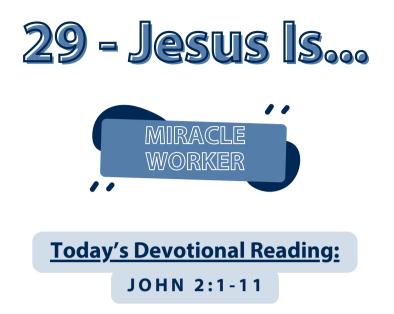
As Jesus is sitting and teaching a crowd one day, he begins to thank the Father for giving knowledge to ones who have a child-like faith. By saying this, Jesus is praising God for those who pursue him wholeheartedly and listen eagerly to what he says, trusting and believing in him like a child would a parent.

After thanking God for those who have such a faith, Jesus gives an invitation. He says, "Come to me, all of you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, because I am lowly and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls'" (Matthew 11:28-29 CSB).

Jesus has a heart of compassion that invites those who need his help to come to him. He offers to bear our load and help us carry our burdens, walking alongside us each step of the way.

How does today's devotion grow your knowledge of Jesus?

Where might you need Jesus' compassion in your life today?



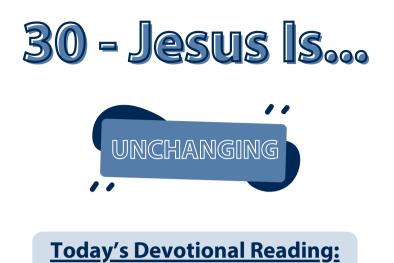
At the beginning of Jesus' ministry, he attended a wedding in Cana of Galilee with his family and disciples. While at this wedding, the bride's family runs out of wine, and Mary turns to Jesus for help.

As a Jew, Jesus knew how big of a deal it was for a family to run out of wine at a wedding. This would have brought great shame to the families of the couple getting married, and people would only remember their failure to host the wedding properly rather than the celebration of the couple being wed.

Jesus performed his first miracle here to save a family from shame and show his disciples his power and authority from the Father. This is the first miracle of Jesus' ministry, but it was most certainly not the last, nor the greatest! Jesus was (and is) a miracle-working Savior.

How does today's devotion grow your knowledge of Jesus?

Where in your life might you need Jesus' miracle working power?



#### HEBREWS 13:1-8

In the Bible, the book of Hebrews is often regarded as one of the most brilliant and faith-filled books in Scripture. The author of Hebrews is unknown, but we do know they were a Christian writing to Jews (i.e., Hebrews) who had come to believe in Christ. The author's main intention was to encourage his readers to continue on in following Christ, persevering even in the trial.

As the author closes out the book, he offers final thoughts for his readers and urges them to remain constant and obedient in the faith. He reminds them that God will never leave them (Deuteronomy 31:6) and that He will always help them (Psalm 118:6).

The author also encourages his readers with this: "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow" (Hebrews 13:8 CSB). Every "Jesus is..." statement in this devotional holds true yesterday, today, tomorrow, and forever. Jesus will <u>never</u> change!

How does today's devotion grow your knowledge of Jesus?

How does it encourage you to know Jesus will never change?



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