

Prayer Changes Everything!

I Believe in the Power of Prayer!

April 1, 2017 Volume 28

Alleluia, Christ Arose! He is risen! The Lord is risen indeed! This is our Easter Message.

Is this a story you are ashamed to tell? The Lord is risen indeed! For many of us, Easter is a time of great rejoicing, because we are celebrating the risen and ascended Lord. This same Jesus, who died on the cross so that we could claim salvation, is risen. Death could not hold him, the tomb could not restrain him, He arose, Alleluia, Christ arose! So then, why are you not spreading the good news? Why are you not gloriously arrayed like the lilies? Have you no recollection of what Jesus has done; the shame, the agony, the reproach that he bore for our sakes? My brothers and sisters in Christ, let us spread the good news of Easter, let us share the meaning of Easter with those who do not know. Let us explain to our children why we celebrate Easter. During the 40-day period of Lent in preparation for Easter, many of us fasted in one way or the other, but the mission was the same. We all were in need of a spiritual cleansing; we repented of our sins, we asked God to help us in our weaknesses, to turn us away from evil, to free us from pride and anxiety, gossip, wrangling, backbiting, covetousness, evil clamor and so much more. But, will we now revert to our old ways? My brothers and sisters in Christ, we must never put our hands to the plough and turn back. There is nothing in our past that could be more enticing than the plans God have before us. Old things are passed away and you I are born again. Let us walk in the newness of life, keeping the cross of Christ always before us, to lead us and to guide us in his way.



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PRAYER CHANGES EVERYTHING!

How deep is God's love for us? Could it be measured?

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Do you still have any reason to question God's love for you? God's love is deep and broad and wide. It cannot be measured, it cannot be controlled, and it cannot fail. My brothers and sisters in Christ, all of us have experienced God's love at various points in our lives. It may not be readily absorbed by those who do not fully trust him, but know this; God holds us when we are weak; he guides us when we are perplexed; he loves us at our worst, and is with us when everyone else gives us up. Have you ever been in trouble so deep that you thought you would never get out and then suddenly, you felt relief? It's like the song-writer said, "I was sinking deep in sin, far from the peaceful shore, very deeply stained with sin sinking to rise no more, then the master of the sea, heard my despairing cry, and from the waters lifted me now safe am I. Love lifted me, love lifted me, when nothing else could help, love lifted me." God is that love that lifted you! Most times when we lose our way, we are too ashamed to call on God, and as a result have no power to help ourselves and continue to fall. But, know that God's love shines brightest in our darkest hours, his saving hand is longest when we sinking at our lowest, that God's mercy for us is ever sure when we are most doubtful. God's love will always lift us up, but we must acknowledge him; call on him and he will answer us in times of trouble.

God can fill the void in your heart and mine. Make yourself more available to him.

All of us know how it feels to be rejected. In our quest to experience love, to fill the void in our hearts, we are constantly making other people our priority when they only see us as opportunity. That void will never be filled if we keep getting our priorities mixed up, if we keep looking for love in the wrong places. Put God first. He can fill the emptiness inside of you. God's love for us never changes. His love for us is steadfast. Where have you been looking? How many times have you been rejected? If you really want to find genuine love, Jesus is the answer. He has great plans for you. He will use you in his service not for gain but for profit. When we are being used by others we feel exploited, but when we are used by God we feel liberated. Many people who complain of being lonely and are well, need to be in the service of the Lord; and sometimes, even when we are unwell, God can still use us to be a blessing to someone else. When we learn to prioritize, God will intervene and open doors of opportunities for us. God is able to use the little that we have for good. Too many times we are at our lowest and it seems like at that moment there comes someone who is a point below. Many times we are complaining that we are down to our last dollar, when someone else has not seen a dollar in a long time. Too often we lament about our sickness that is curable, when someone has just been given a month to live. My brothers and sisters in Christ, there is no void in your heart and mine that God is not able to fill. There is no door that God can open that man will be able to close. We need to trust God more. We need to give God more opportunity. We need to rely on his faithfulness. We need to stop getting our priorities mixed up; because, despite what we may think, we are all top priority in God's eyes. When we put him first, our opportunities are endless.

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Why do we love? We love because God first loved us. 1 John 4:19

If anyone says, "I love God," but hates his brother, he is a liar. For anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen. Lord, allow your love to change me. If I have been unlovely, change me, so that others could see you in me; so that others could experience your love through me. I want to be lovely always, so please, empty me of all that is unworthy, and fill my life anew with your love that has no limit or measure. Lord, many times our love comes with conditions, we hold others hostage, but teach us to love like you do, without conditions. When we are tempted to be unlovely towards others, send us gentle reminders of how unlovely we have been, yet, you did not withhold your love from us. Some of us are ashamed or afraid to claim God's love because of the many times that we have failed; but know that Psalm 23:64 says; surely your unfailing love will pursue me all the days of my life. No matter how far we run or hide from God's love, it will pursue us, because it is God's will. He loves us too much to turn his back on us. And, if God so loves us, we should try to love one another and not be so quick to judge or give up on one another. We get angry, we hold grudges, and we even act spitefully towards those we claim to love. Does God treat us this way? He could, but he does not. We are so deserving of his wrath but he is merciful, so, let us learn to love one another as God love us. God's love is big, God's love is bold, and it's ours to have and to hold and to share.

How I prepare myself to celebrate the joyous Easter.

I find myself praying more purposefully during Lent. It seems like I am more repentant, more mindful of the cross, more in touch with my God during this time. It seems like every sin I have committed stands out before me during Lent, and I am thankful for this Season in which I seek spiritual cleansing. I use this time to self-examine, to repent by praying and fasting, by self-denial and by reading and meditating on God's word. My favorite prayer during this time is Psalm 51, the Psalm of David. I repeatedly ask God to be merciful to me, to create in me a clean heart and to renew a right spirit within me. During Lent, I find that my temptations are greater. I have to be always on guard as the enemy attacks me in the same areas. But, God is good, he promised that he would not allow us to be tempted beyond what we can bear, and he always provides a way out, we just need to take it. The night before Easter Sunday, Holy Saturday, I light white candles around the house and enjoy a quiet Easter Vigil in preparation for Easter when I will renew my Baptismal Covenant. When Easter Sunday comes around and the church is packed, the choir is at its best, the Easter songs, the incense burning, the altar decked out with white Easter lilies, all set the stage for a glorious Easter. When I say, the Lord is risen indeed, I believe that he is risen in my pure heart.

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Songs have a way of lifting me up when I am feeling down. Here is one of my favorites as our featured adult song:

Love lifted me!

James Rowe— 1912

I was sinking deep in sin, far from the peaceful shore,
Very deeply stained within, sinking to rise no more,
But the Master of the sea heard my despairing cry,
From the waters lifted me, now safe am I.

Love lifted me!

Love lifted me!

When nothing else could help,

Love lifted me!

All my heart to Him I give, ever to Him I'll cling,
In His blessed presence live, ever His praises sing,
Love so mighty and so true, merits my soul's best songs,
Faithful, loving service, too, to Him belongs.

Souls in danger, look above, Jesus completely saves,
He will lift you by His love, out of the angry waves;
He's the Master of the sea, billows His will obey,
He your Savior wants to be, be saved today.



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INSPIRATIONAL QUOTES FROM THE DESK OF JEWELLYN GREER

Easter is a time of great rejoicing, because we are celebrating the risen and ascended Lord

God's love is deep and broad and wide. It cannot be measured, it cannot be controlled, and it cannot fail

Let us spread the good news of Easter. Let us share its meaning with those who do not know

There is nothing in our past that could be more enticing than the plans God has before us

God holds us when we are weak; he guides us when we are perplexed; and he loves us at our worst

Put God first. He can fill the emptiness inside of you

We are all top priority in God's eyes. When we put him first, our opportunities are endless

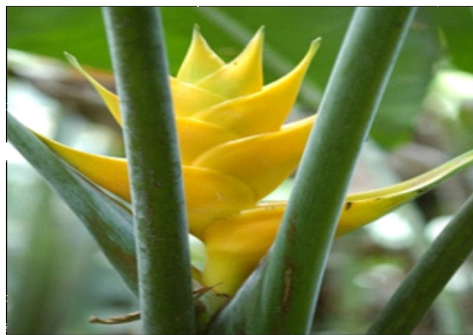
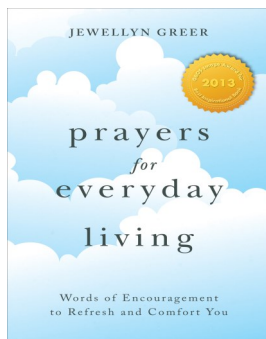
No matter how far we run or hide from God's love, it will pursue us, because it is God's will

God's love is big, God's love is bold, and it's ours to have and to hold and to share

When I say, the Lord is risen indeed, I believe that he is risen in my pure heart

God's love shines brightest in our darkest hours

Get more quotes like these at: <http://prayersforeverydayliving.com/quotes/>



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Our Spotlight is on you! What Lent and Easter meant to me as a child and what they mean to me now! Davika Greer's Story.

Lent is the 40 days leading up to Easter. It begins with Ash Wednesday. On Ash Wednesday as a child, our school went to church to receive our ashes – a sign that we were created from dust and one day will return to it. During Lent, it is customary to have church services every Wednesday evening. I grew up in the Caribbean and had to go to church with my grandmother, no ifs, ands or buts about it. I could remember doing my homework in church; not even that excuse prevented me from attending. It was the only time you would get away with falling asleep in church! Growing up I dreaded Easter! It's definitely not the reason you are thinking; I was a tomboy and I had to wear a dress on Easter Sunday! Not just any dress, but a brightly colored, frilly, poufy number! I also had to wear equally frilly socks and matching shoes. Oh yes, and I had to do something with my hair! Lots of bubbles and bows. As an adult, I still get my ashes on Ash Wednesday, and I am more aware of the reason why Jesus had to die on the cross, and Easter is no longer dreaded, but one of my favorite seasons. I love all the hymns. Christ arose, Christ the Lord is risen today, I know that my redeemer lives, to name a few. I was in the choir and still love to sing these hymns. Easter marks the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, our Savior! To me, Easter means rebirth, a fresh start. Jesus died on the cross for my sins, (Romans 5:8). Because of Him there is eternal life. (John 11:25) Have a Happy and Blessed Easter!

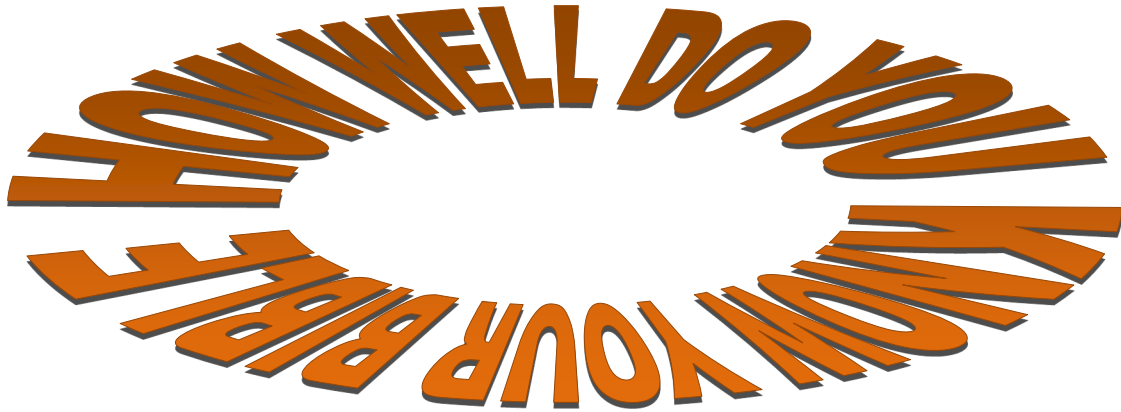
Children's Corner: Happy Easter! These are all symbols that tells the Easter story.

Could you use these symbols to tell the
Easter Story to your children?

Rooster	Palms	Feet Washing
Dice	Silver Coins	Gethsemane
Thieves	Sleep	Pray
Tomb	Thorns	Betrayal
Cross	Passover	Death

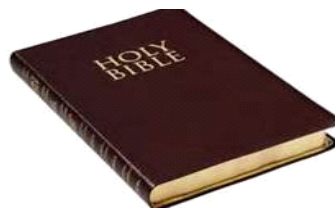
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Match the correct answers to the questions

QUESTIONS	ANSWERS
She came to the tomb where Jesus was buried and found it empty	New Life
Easter Sunday is also known as this Sunday	Easter
Lent is the period before Easter and last this many days	Palms
This week is celebrated before Easter Sunday	Resurrection Sunday
Easter Eggs are a sign of this	Mary Magdalene
These branches are given in church during a particular Sunday in Lent	40 Days
What is the most celebrate Christian event	Good Friday
Which day in Lent honors the day of Jesus' crucifixion	Holy Week



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Childhood songs that we have learned have been passed on for generations. Let's keep it going. If you have a song that you would like to share, email it. Our featured childhood song is one of mine learned in Sunday School.

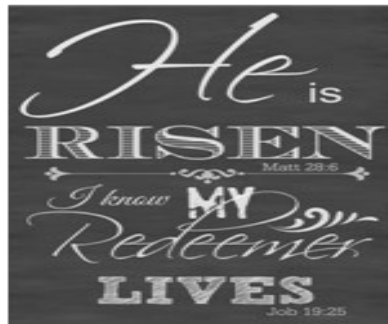
The Day of Resurrection!

John Walter - 1863

The day of resurrection! Earth, tell it out abroad;
The Passover of gladness, the Passover of God.
From death to life eternal, from earth unto the sky,
Our Christ hath brought us over, with hymns of victory.

Our hearts be pure from evil, that we may see aright
The Lord in rays eternal of resurrection light;
And listening to his accents, may hear, so calm and plain,
His own "All hail!" and, hearing, may raise the victor strain.

Now let the heavens be joyful! Let earth the song begin!
Let the round world keep triumph, and all that is therein!
Let all things seen and unseen their notes in gladness blend,
For Christ the Lord hath risen, our joy that hath no end.



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