

Living in Hope

Help from the Scriptures for coping with HIV/Aids



Living in Hope

First digital edition 2014

Good News Bible (Today's English Version)

© American Bible Society 1976, 1992

© Bible Society of South Africa 1999, 2014

All rights reserved. No part of this book may, without prior written permission of the publisher, be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical or otherwise, either through photocopying, writing, audio recording, or any other system for information storage and retrieval.

Published by the Bible Society of South Africa,
P O Box 5500, Tyger Valley 7536, Bellville

www.biblesociety.co.za

Epub format	ISBN 978-0-7982-1780-4
Mobi format	ISBN 978-0-7982-1781-1
PDF format	ISBN 978-0-7982-1782-8



Introduction

HIV/Aids has had a severe impact on the lives of millions of people in our country. It has devastated communities throughout our land, leaving countless orphans to fend for themselves. Child-headed households are common while many thousands of young adults have been affected by the epidemic.

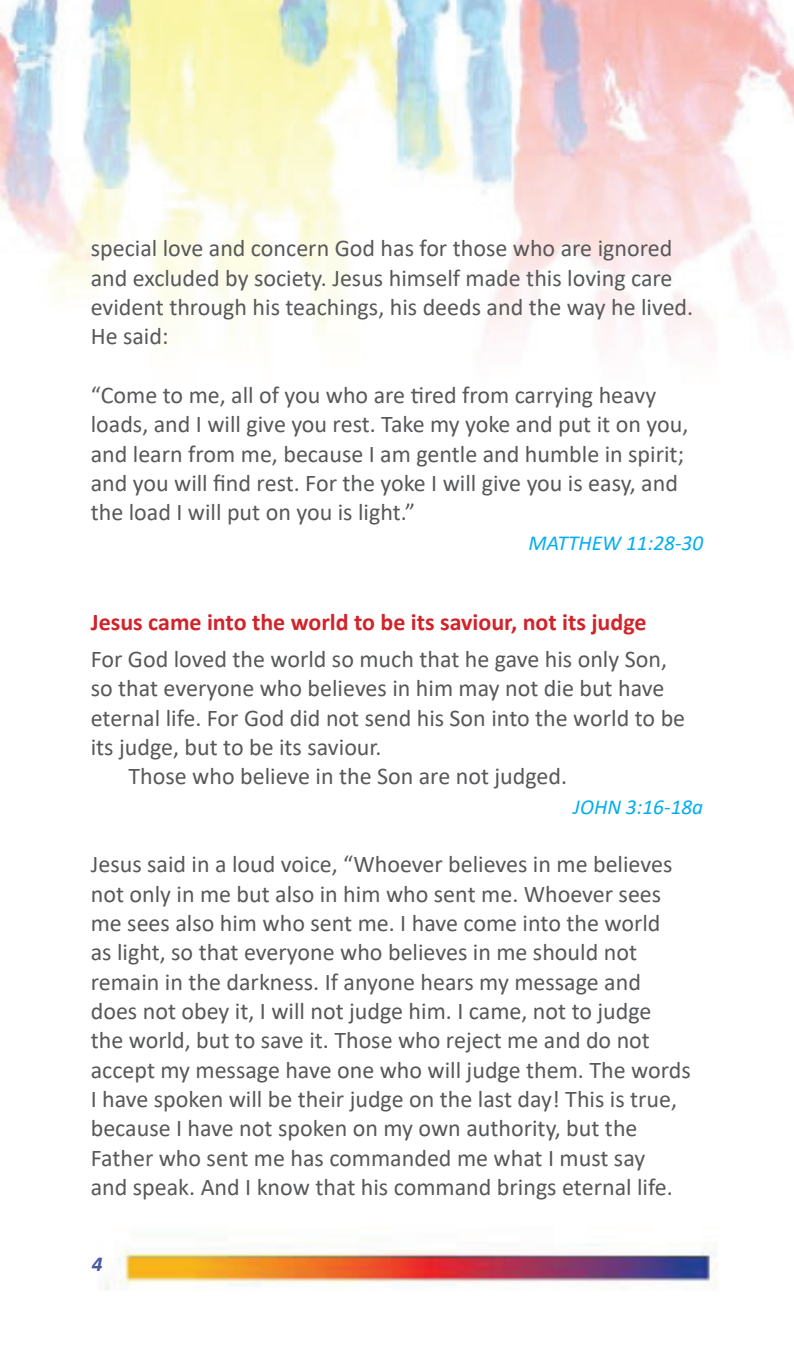
Those who suffer from HIV/Aids experience emotions ranging from anger and shame to a sense of helplessness and loss. They fear rejection and dying while communities throughout our country are faced with poverty and hardship with the death of so many breadwinners. They feel they have nowhere to turn for help and encouragement.

Throughout the Bible we are assured of God's presence. Even when life seems to betray us, when others turn away from us, and we feel most alone, our loving God remains faithful. He is with us even in the most desperate situations. Whatever happens, as Paul put it, "there is nothing in all creation that will ever be able to separate us from the love of God which is ours through Christ Jesus our Lord" (*Romans 8:39b*).

As you read the selection of Bible passages in this booklet, reflect on God's redemptive love and promises of hope and comfort to all who are suffering and hurting.

God deeply cares for each one of us

The Bible constantly affirms that God cares for everyone, regardless of our physical or spiritual condition, or even our standing in society. What is more, the Bible reveals the



special love and concern God has for those who are ignored and excluded by society. Jesus himself made this loving care evident through his teachings, his deeds and the way he lived. He said:

“Come to me, all of you who are tired from carrying heavy loads, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke and put it on you, and learn from me, because I am gentle and humble in spirit; and you will find rest. For the yoke I will give you is easy, and the load I will put on you is light.”

MATTHEW 11:28-30

Jesus came into the world to be its saviour, not its judge

For God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not die but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to be its judge, but to be its saviour.

Those who believe in the Son are not judged.

JOHN 3:16-18a

Jesus said in a loud voice, “Whoever believes in me believes not only in me but also in him who sent me. Whoever sees me sees also him who sent me. I have come into the world as light, so that everyone who believes in me should not remain in the darkness. If anyone hears my message and does not obey it, I will not judge him. I came, not to judge the world, but to save it. Those who reject me and do not accept my message have one who will judge them. The words I have spoken will be their judge on the last day! This is true, because I have not spoken on my own authority, but the Father who sent me has commanded me what I must say and speak. And I know that his command brings eternal life.



What I say, then, is what the Father has told me to say.”

JOHN 12:44-50

Jesus embraces everyone in his love

Jesus left that place, and as he walked along, he saw a tax collector, named Matthew, sitting in his office. He said to him, “Follow me.”

Matthew got up and followed him.

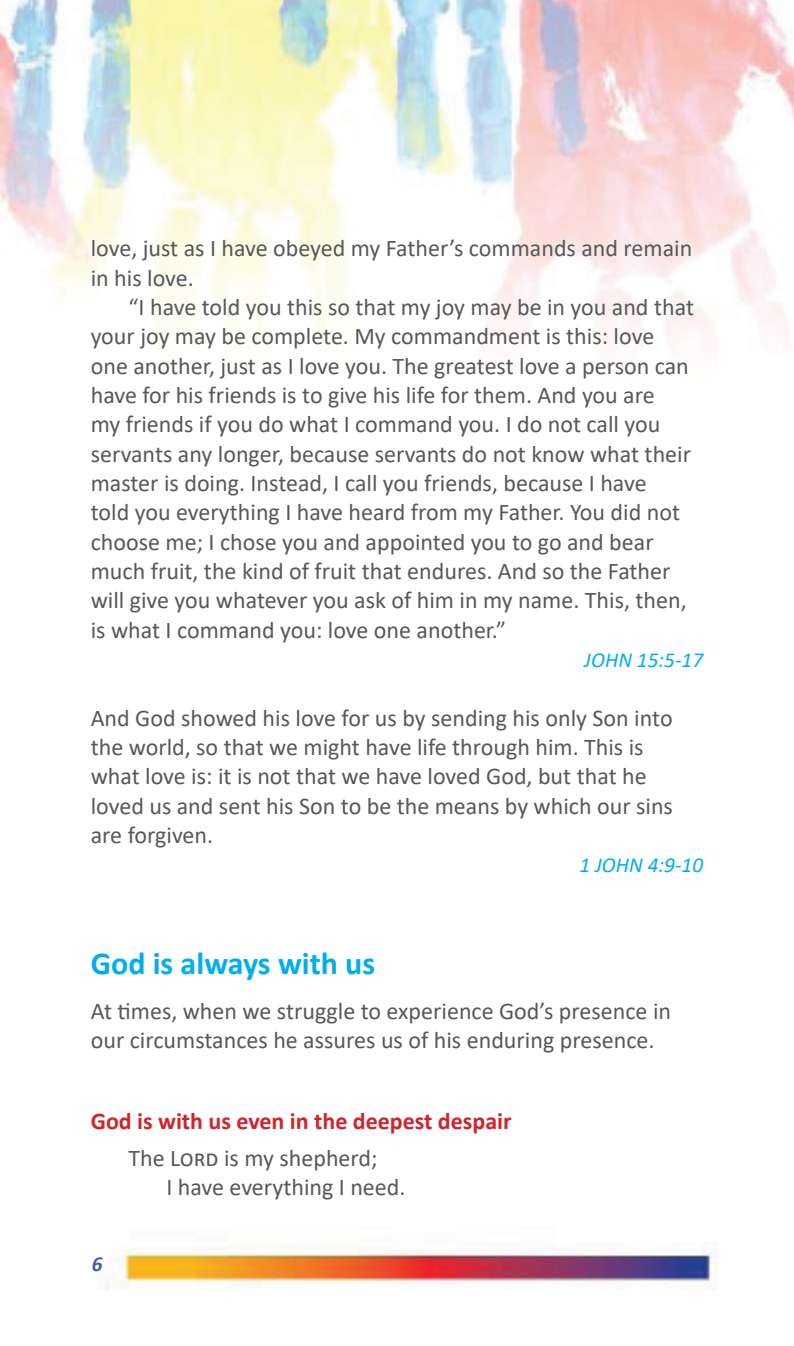
While Jesus was having a meal in Matthew’s house, many tax collectors and other outcasts came and joined Jesus and his disciples at the table. Some Pharisees saw this and asked his disciples, “Why does your teacher eat with such people?”

Jesus heard them and answered, “People who are well do not need a doctor, but only those who are sick. Go and find out what is meant by the scripture that says: ‘It is kindness that I want, not animal sacrifices.’ I have not come to call respectable people, but outcasts.”

MATTHEW 9:9-13

Jesus calls us his friends

“I am the vine, and you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will bear much fruit; for you can do nothing without me. Whoever does not remain in me is thrown out like a branch and dries up; such branches are gathered up and thrown into the fire, where they are burnt. If you remain in me and my words remain in you, then you will ask for anything you wish, and you shall have it. My Father’s glory is shown by your bearing much fruit; and in this way you become my disciples. I love you just as the Father loves me; remain in my love. If you obey my commands, you will remain in my



love, just as I have obeyed my Father's commands and remain in his love.

"I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. My commandment is this: love one another, just as I love you. The greatest love a person can have for his friends is to give his life for them. And you are my friends if you do what I command you. I do not call you servants any longer, because servants do not know what their master is doing. Instead, I call you friends, because I have told you everything I have heard from my Father. You did not choose me; I chose you and appointed you to go and bear much fruit, the kind of fruit that endures. And so the Father will give you whatever you ask of him in my name. This, then, is what I command you: love one another."

JOHN 15:5-17

And God showed his love for us by sending his only Son into the world, so that we might have life through him. This is what love is: it is not that we have loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the means by which our sins are forgiven.

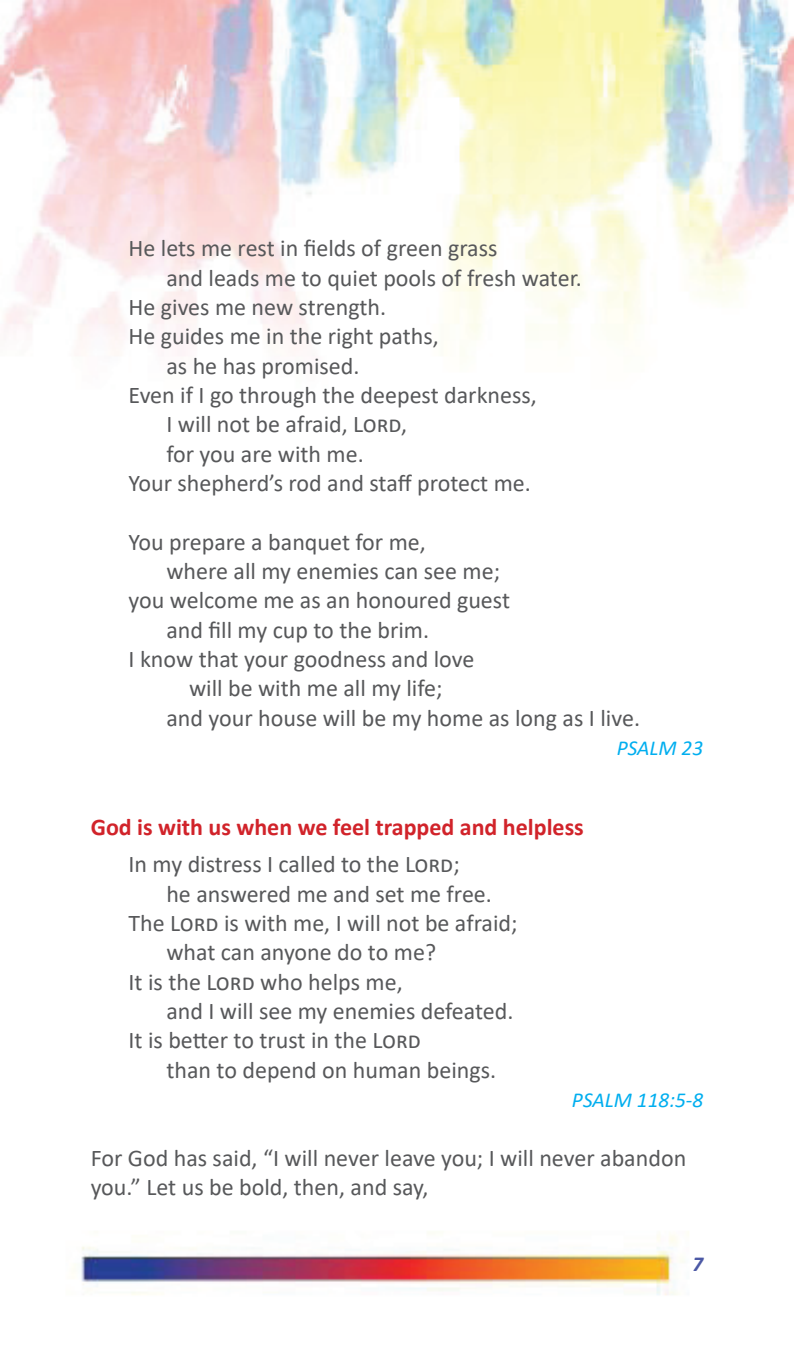
1 JOHN 4:9-10

God is always with us

At times, when we struggle to experience God's presence in our circumstances he assures us of his enduring presence.

God is with us even in the deepest despair

The LORD is my shepherd;
I have everything I need.



He lets me rest in fields of green grass
and leads me to quiet pools of fresh water.
He gives me new strength.
He guides me in the right paths,
as he has promised.
Even if I go through the deepest darkness,
I will not be afraid, LORD,
for you are with me.
Your shepherd's rod and staff protect me.

You prepare a banquet for me,
where all my enemies can see me;
you welcome me as an honoured guest
and fill my cup to the brim.
I know that your goodness and love
will be with me all my life;
and your house will be my home as long as I live.

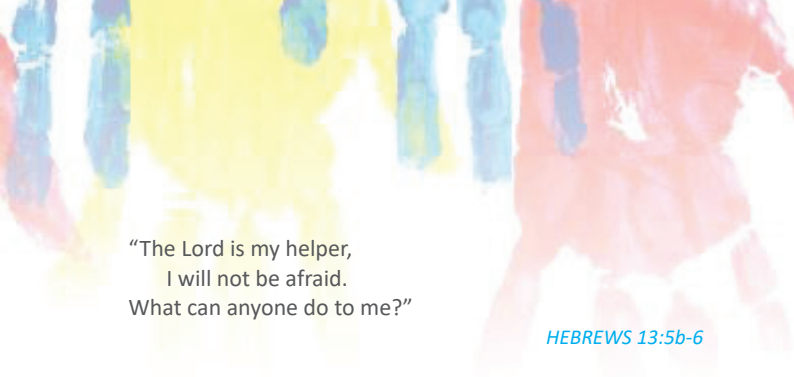
PSALM 23

God is with us when we feel trapped and helpless

In my distress I called to the LORD;
he answered me and set me free.
The LORD is with me, I will not be afraid;
what can anyone do to me?
It is the LORD who helps me,
and I will see my enemies defeated.
It is better to trust in the LORD
than to depend on human beings.

PSALM 118:5-8

For God has said, "I will never leave you; I will never abandon you." Let us be bold, then, and say,



“The Lord is my helper,
I will not be afraid.
What can anyone do to me?”

HEBREWS 13:5b-6

Nothing can separate us from the love of God

In view of all this, what can we say? If God is for us, who can be against us? Certainly not God, who did not even keep back his own Son, but offered him for us all! He gave us his Son — will he not also freely give us all things? Who will accuse God’s chosen people? God himself declares them not guilty! Who, then, will condemn them? Not Christ Jesus, who died, or rather, who was raised to life and is at the right-hand side of God, pleading with him for us! Who, then, can separate us from the love of Christ? Can trouble do it, or hardship or persecution or hunger or poverty or danger or death? As the scripture says,

“For your sake we are in danger of death at all times;
we are treated like sheep that are
going to be slaughtered.”

No, in all these things we have complete victory through him who loved us! For I am certain that nothing can separate us from his love: neither death nor life, neither angels nor other heavenly rulers or powers, neither the present nor the future, neither the world above nor the world below — there is nothing in all creation that will ever be able to separate us from the love of God which is ours through Christ Jesus our LORD.

ROMANS 8:31-39



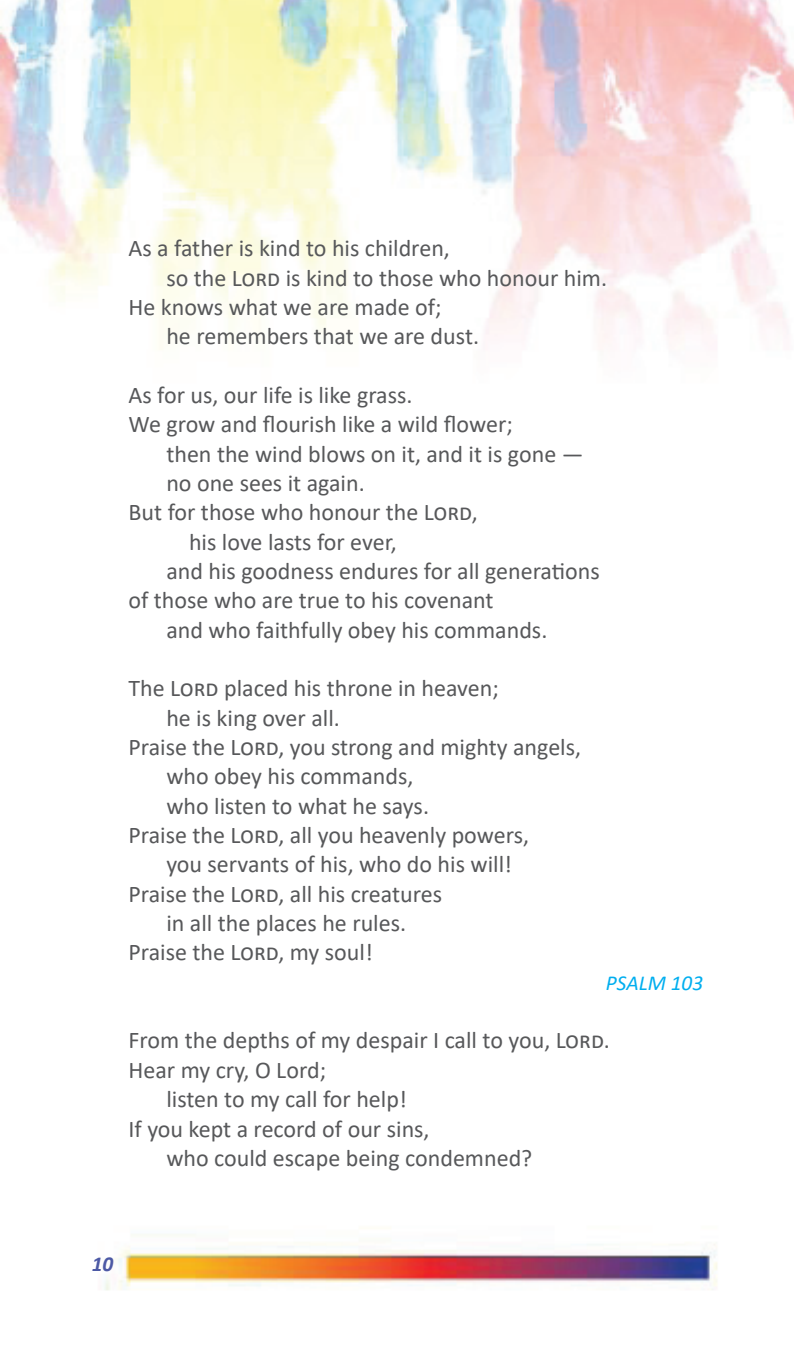
God offers his love and acceptance to everyone

Sometimes you may feel that God has turned away from you, and no longer cares. But this is far from the truth. God is always eager to offer forgiveness and to lovingly accept us.

God is faithful and his love is abundant

Praise the LORD, my soul!
All my being, praise his holy name!
Praise the LORD, my soul,
and do not forget how kind he is.
He forgives all my sins
and heals all my diseases.
He keeps me from the grave
and blesses me with love and mercy.
He fills my life with good things,
so that I stay young and strong like an eagle.

The LORD judges in favour of the oppressed
and gives them their rights.
He revealed his plans to Moses
and let the people of Israel see his mighty deeds.
The LORD is merciful and loving,
slow to become angry and full of constant love.
He does not keep on rebuking;
he is not angry for ever.
He does not punish us as we deserve
or repay us according to our sins and wrongs.
As high as the sky is above the earth,
so great is his love for those who honour him.
As far as the east is from the west,
so far does he remove our sins from us.



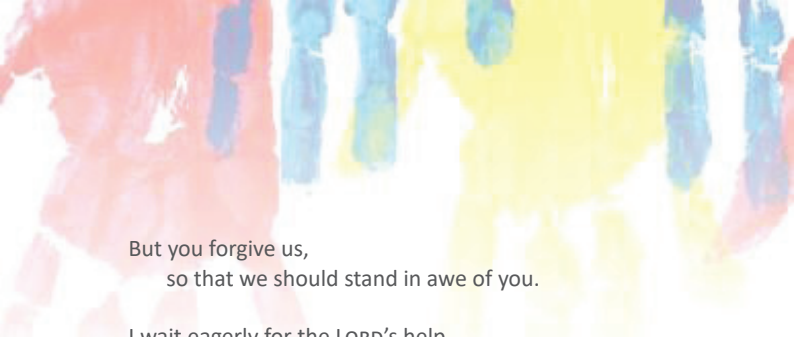
As a father is kind to his children,
so the LORD is kind to those who honour him.
He knows what we are made of;
he remembers that we are dust.

As for us, our life is like grass.
We grow and flourish like a wild flower;
then the wind blows on it, and it is gone —
no one sees it again.
But for those who honour the LORD,
his love lasts for ever,
and his goodness endures for all generations
of those who are true to his covenant
and who faithfully obey his commands.

The LORD placed his throne in heaven;
he is king over all.
Praise the LORD, you strong and mighty angels,
who obey his commands,
who listen to what he says.
Praise the LORD, all you heavenly powers,
you servants of his, who do his will!
Praise the LORD, all his creatures
in all the places he rules.
Praise the LORD, my soul!

PSALM 103

From the depths of my despair I call to you, LORD.
Hear my cry, O Lord;
listen to my call for help!
If you kept a record of our sins,
who could escape being condemned?



But you forgive us,
so that we should stand in awe of you.

I wait eagerly for the LORD's help,
and in his word I trust.


I wait for the Lord
more eagerly than watchmen wait for the dawn —
than watchmen wait for the dawn.

Israel, trust in the LORD,
because his love is constant
and he is always willing to save.
He will save his people Israel
from all their sins.

PSALM 130

God is with you in times of crisis

Israel, the LORD who created you says,
“Do not be afraid — I will save you.
I have called you by name — you are mine.
When you pass through deep waters, I will be with you;
your troubles will not overwhelm you.
When you pass through fire, you will not be burnt;
the hard trials that come will not hurt you.
For I am the LORD your God,
the holy God of Israel, who saves you.
I will give up Egypt to set you free;
I will give up Ethiopia and Seba.
I will give up whole nations to save your life,
because you are precious to me
and because I love you and give you honour.



Do not be afraid — I am with you!”

ISAIAH 43:1-5a

God identifies with those who are rejected

Throughout the Scriptures God shows special concern for the vulnerable — widows, orphans, prisoners, prostitutes and those whom society rejects.

God sees that the vulnerable are cared for

“The LORD your God is supreme over all gods and over all powers. He is great and mighty, and he is to be feared. He does not show partiality, and he does not accept bribes. He makes sure that orphans and widows are treated fairly; he loves the foreigners who live with our people, and gives them food and clothes. So then, show love for those foreigners, because you were once foreigners in Egypt. Obey the LORD your God and worship only him. Be faithful to him and make your promises in his name alone. Praise him — he is your God, and you have seen with your own eyes the great and astounding things that he has done for you.”

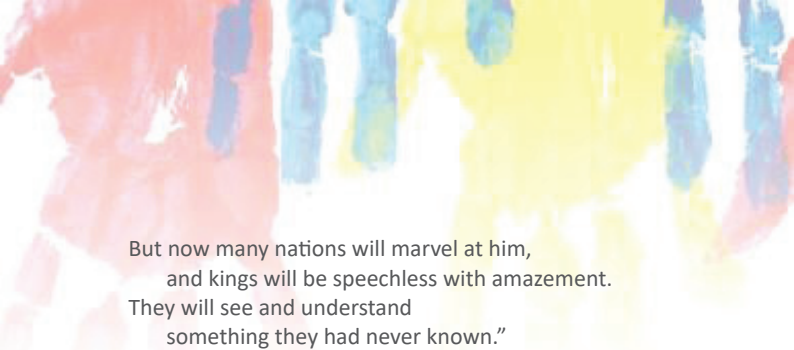
DEUTERONOMY 10:17-21

God’s suffering servant was despised and rejected

The LORD says,

“My servant will succeed in his task;
he will be highly honoured.

Many people were shocked when they saw him;
he was so disfigured that he hardly looked human.



But now many nations will marvel at him,
and kings will be speechless with amazement.
They will see and understand
something they had never known.”

The people reply,
“Who would have believed what we now report?
Who could have seen the LORD’s hand in this?
It was the will of the LORD that his servant
should grow like a plant taking root in dry ground.
He had no dignity or beauty
to make us take notice of him.
There was nothing attractive about him,
nothing that would draw us to him.
We despised him and rejected him;
he endured suffering and pain.
No one would even look at him —
we ignored him as if he were nothing.”

ISAIAH 52:13 – 53:3

Jesus himself was rejected

The soldiers took Jesus inside to the courtyard of the governor’s palace and called together the rest of the company. They put a purple robe on Jesus, made a crown out of thorny branches, and put it on his head. Then they began to salute him: “Long live the King of the Jews!” They beat him over the head with a stick, spat on him, fell on their knees, and bowed down to him. When they had finished mocking him, they took off the purple robe and put his own clothes back on him. Then they led him out to crucify him.

MARK 15:16-20

Our hope in God reaches beyond death

HIV/Aids makes us sharply aware of our own mortality and ultimate death. But the Scriptures proclaim the greater reality of life beyond death.

A tent on earth and a home in heaven

For this reason we never become discouraged. Even though our physical being is gradually decaying, yet our spiritual being is renewed day after day. And this small and temporary trouble we suffer will bring us a tremendous and eternal glory, much greater than the trouble. For we fix our attention, not on things that are seen, but on things that are unseen. What can be seen lasts only for a time, but what cannot be seen lasts for ever.

For we know that when this tent we live in — our body here on earth — is torn down, God will have a house in heaven for us to live in, a home he himself has made, which will last for ever. And now we sigh, so great is our desire that our home which comes from heaven should be put on over us; by being clothed with it we shall not be without a body. While we live in this earthly tent, we groan with a feeling of oppression; it is not that we want to get rid of our earthly body, but that we want to have the heavenly one put on over us, so that what is mortal will be transformed by life. God is the one who has prepared us for this change, and he gave us his Spirit as the guarantee of all that he has in store for us.

So we are always full of courage. We know that as long as we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord's home. For our life is a matter of faith, not of sight. We are full of courage and would much prefer to leave our home in the body and be at home with the Lord.

2 CORINTHIANS 4:16 – 5:8



Death is defeated

The last enemy to be defeated will be death. For the scripture says, “God put *all* things under his feet.” It is clear, of course, that the words “all things” do not include God himself, who puts all things under Christ. But when all things have been placed under Christ’s rule, then he himself, the Son, will place himself under God, who placed all things under him; and God will rule completely over all.

Listen to this secret truth: we shall not all die, but when the last trumpet sounds, we shall all be changed in an instant, as quickly as the blinking of an eye. For when the trumpet sounds, the dead will be raised, never to die again, and we shall all be changed. For what is mortal must be changed into what is immortal; what will die must be changed into what cannot die. So when this takes place, and the mortal has been changed into the immortal, then the scripture will come true: “Death is destroyed; victory is complete!”

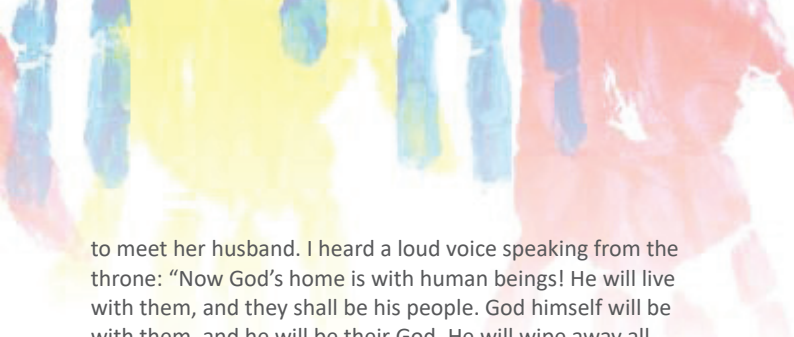
“Where, Death, is your victory?
Where, Death, is your power to hurt?”

Death gets its power to hurt from sin, and sin gets its power from the Law. But thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!

1 CORINTHIANS 15:26-28,51-57

No more pain and no more death

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth. The first heaven and the first earth disappeared, and the sea vanished. And I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared and ready, like a bride dressed



to meet her husband. I heard a loud voice speaking from the throne: “Now God’s home is with human beings! He will live with them, and they shall be his people. God himself will be with them, and he will be their God. He will wipe away all tears from their eyes. There will be no more death, no more grief or crying or pain. The old things have disappeared.”

REVELATION 21:1-4

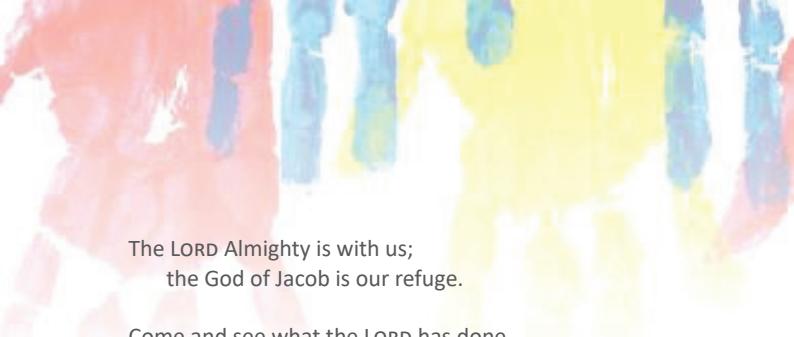
God is the only true source of hope

In the Bible hope is an expression of certainty based on God’s promises rather than our own wishful thinking. And so, when we place our hope in God, it means we are assured that God will finally conquer evil and give us a share in the victory.

God is our shelter and strength

God is our shelter and strength,
always ready to help in times of trouble.
So we will not be afraid, even if the earth is shaken
and mountains fall into the ocean depths;
even if the seas roar and rage,
and the hills are shaken by the violence.

There is a river that brings joy to the city of God,
to the sacred house of the Most High.
God is in that city, and it will never be destroyed;
at early dawn he will come to its aid.
Nations are terrified, kingdoms are shaken;
God thunders, and the earth dissolves.



The LORD Almighty is with us;
the God of Jacob is our refuge.

Come and see what the LORD has done.
See what amazing things he has done on earth.
He stops wars all over the world;
he breaks bows, destroys spears,
and sets shields on fire.
“Stop fighting,” he says, “and know that I am God,
supreme among the nations,
supreme over the world.”

The LORD Almighty is with us;
the God of Jacob is our refuge.

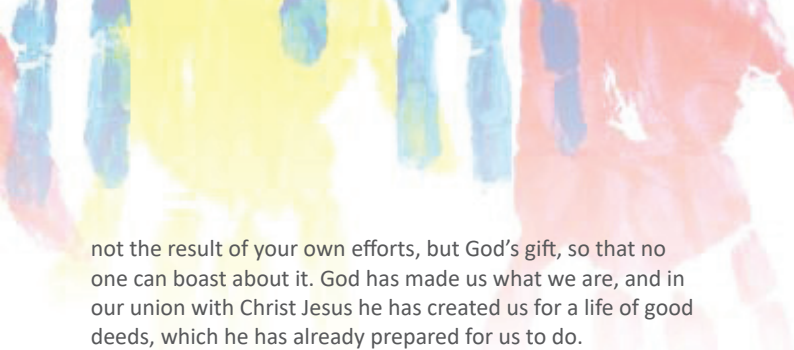
PSALM 46

In God there is grace and mercy

You have sent troubles and suffering on me,
but you will restore my strength;
you will keep me from the grave.
You will make me greater than ever;
you will comfort me again.

PSALM 71:20-21

But God’s mercy is so abundant, and his love for us is so great, that while we were spiritually dead in our disobedience he brought us to life with Christ. It is by God’s grace that you have been saved. In our union with Christ Jesus he raised us up with him to rule with him in the heavenly world. He did this to demonstrate for all time to come the extraordinary greatness of his grace in the love he showed us in Christ Jesus. For it is by God’s grace that you have been saved through faith. It is



not the result of your own efforts, but God's gift, so that no one can boast about it. God has made us what we are, and in our union with Christ Jesus he has created us for a life of good deeds, which he has already prepared for us to do.

EPHESIANS 2:4-10

One day we shall see clearly

Love is eternal. There are inspired messages, but they are temporary; there are gifts of speaking in strange tongues, but they will cease; there is knowledge, but it will pass. For our gifts of knowledge and of inspired messages are only partial; but when what is perfect comes, then what is partial will disappear.

When I was a child, my speech, feelings, and thinking were all those of a child; now that I have grown up, I have no more use for childish ways. What we see now is like a dim image in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. What I know now is only partial; then it will be complete — as complete as God's knowledge of me.

Meanwhile these three remain: faith, hope, and love; and the greatest of these is love.

1 CORINTHIANS 13:8-13

God promises eternal life to all who believe

All who are born on this earth must one day face death. HIV/Aids makes us very aware of our own mortality, but the Bible reveals the way to eternal life for all who accept God's love and believe in Jesus.

Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life

“Do not be worried and upset,” Jesus told them. “Believe in God and believe also in me. There are many rooms in my Father’s house, and I am going to prepare a place for you. I would not tell you this if it were not so. And after I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to myself, so that you will be where I am. You know the way that leads to the place where I am going.”

Thomas said to him, “Lord, we do not know where you are going; so how can we know the way to get there?”

Jesus answered him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life; no one goes to the Father except by me.”

JOHN 14:1-6

Our future is assured in Jesus Christ

He came to his own country, but his own people did not receive him. Some, however, did receive him and believed in him; so he gave them the right to become God’s children.

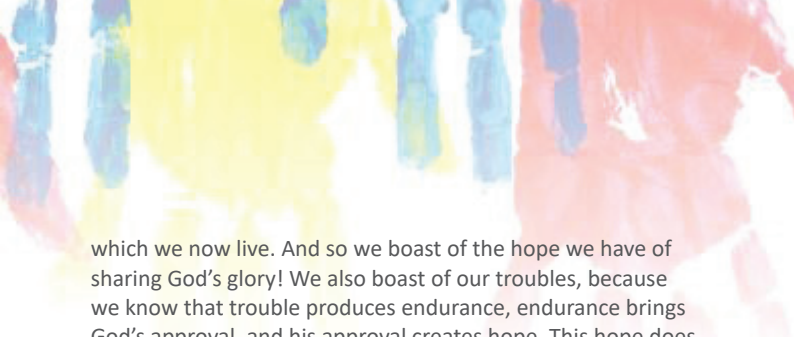
JOHN 1:11-12

“I give them eternal life, and they shall never die. No one can snatch them away from me. What my Father has given me is greater than everything, and no one can snatch them away from the Father’s care.”

JOHN 10:28-29

God gives peace

Now that we have been put right with God through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. He has brought us by faith into this experience of God’s grace, in



which we now live. And so we boast of the hope we have of sharing God's glory! We also boast of our troubles, because we know that trouble produces endurance, endurance brings God's approval, and his approval creates hope. This hope does not disappoint us, for God has poured out his love into our hearts by means of the Holy Spirit, who is God's gift to us.

For when we were still helpless, Christ died for the wicked at the time that God chose. It is a difficult thing for someone to die for a righteous person. It may even be that someone might dare to die for a good person. But God has shown us how much he loves us — it was while we were still sinners that Christ died for us! By his blood we are now put right with God; how much more, then, will we be saved by him from God's anger! We were God's enemies, but he made us his friends through the death of his Son. Now that we are God's friends, how much more will we be saved by Christ's life! But that is not all; we rejoice because of what God has done through our Lord Jesus Christ, who has now made us God's friends.

ROMANS 5:1-11

Don't worry about anything, but in all your prayers ask God for what you need, always asking him with a thankful heart. And God's peace, which is far beyond human understanding, will keep your hearts and minds safe in union with Christ Jesus.

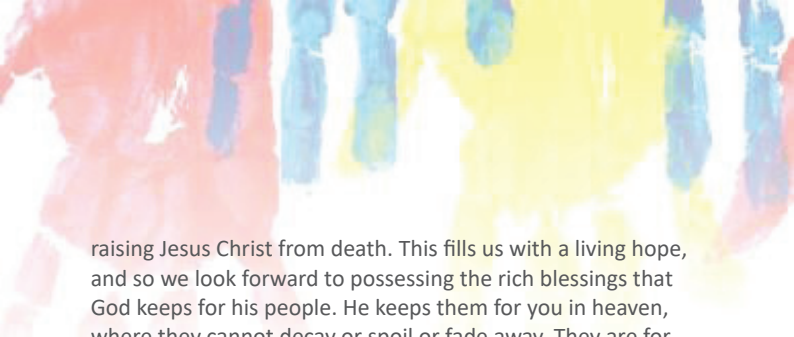
PHILIPPIANS 4:6-7

Leave all your worries with him, because he cares for you.

1 PETER 5:7

Present sufferings and future glory

Let us give thanks to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! Because of his great mercy he gave us new life by



raising Jesus Christ from death. This fills us with a living hope, and so we look forward to possessing the rich blessings that God keeps for his people. He keeps them for you in heaven, where they cannot decay or spoil or fade away. They are for you, who through faith are kept safe by God's power for the salvation which is ready to be revealed at the end of time.

Be glad about this, even though it may now be necessary for you to be sad for a while because of the many kinds of trials you suffer. Their purpose is to prove that your faith is genuine. Even gold, which can be destroyed, is tested by fire; and so your faith, which is much more precious than gold, must also be tested, so that it may endure. Then you will receive praise and glory and honour on the Day when Jesus Christ is revealed. You love him, although you have not seen him, and you believe in him, although you do not now see him. So you rejoice with a great and glorious joy which words cannot express, because you are receiving the salvation of your souls, which is the purpose of your faith in him.

1 PETER 1:3-9

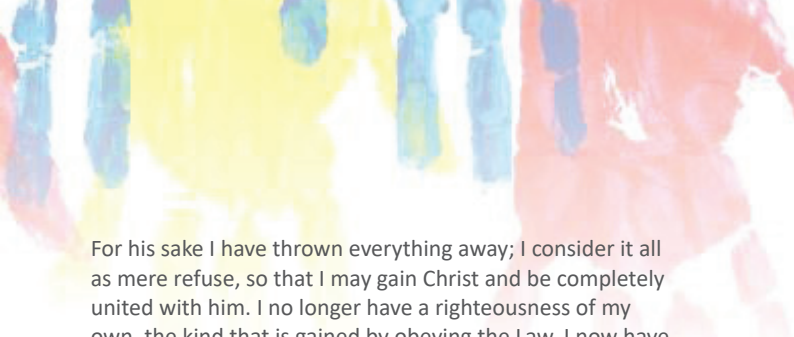
Jesus takes our burden on his shoulders

“Come to me, all of you who are tired from carrying heavy loads, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke and put it on you, and learn from me, because I am gentle and humble in spirit; and you will find rest. For the yoke I will give you is easy, and the load I will put on you is light.”

MATTHEW 11:28-30

What really matters

I reckon everything as complete loss for the sake of what is so much more valuable, the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord.



For his sake I have thrown everything away; I consider it all as mere refuse, so that I may gain Christ and be completely united with him. I no longer have a righteousness of my own, the kind that is gained by obeying the Law. I now have the righteousness that is given through faith in Christ, the righteousness that comes from God and is based on faith. All I want is to know Christ and to experience the power of his resurrection, to share in his sufferings and become like him in his death, in the hope that I myself will be raised from death to life.

PHILIPPIANS 3:8b-11

Prayers of hope on behalf of all who hurt

May the Lord himself, who is our source of peace, give you peace at all times and in every way. The Lord be with you all.

2 THESSALONIANS 3:16

May God, the source of hope, fill you with all joy and peace by means of your faith in him, so that your hope will continue to grow by the power of the Holy Spirit.

ROMANS 15:13



Comforting people with HIV/AIDS and those close to them

The Holy Scriptures offer good news — the Good News of God’s love and acceptance. In this booklet, you have found words of comfort and inspiration from the Bible to show that you are not alone.

You will have discovered that:

- God deeply cares for each one of us
- God is always with us
- God offers his love and acceptance to everyone
- God identifies with those who are rejected
- Our hope in God reaches beyond death
- God is the only true source of hope
- God promises eternal life to all who believe
- Our future is assured in Jesus Christ

NOTES

Comforting people with HIV/Aids and those close to them

In this booklet, you have found words of comfort and inspiration from the Bible to show that you are not alone. The Holy Scriptures offer good news — the Good News of God's love and acceptance.

You will have discovered that:

- God deeply cares for each one of us
- God is always with us
- God offers his love and acceptance to everyone
- God identifies with those who are rejected
- Our hope in God reaches beyond death
- God is the only true source of hope
- God promises eternal life to all who believe
- Our future is assured in Jesus Christ



Published and distributed by the
Bible Society of South Africa.
www.biblesociety.co.za.



BibleSA.co.za

BibleSA

Bibles and audio Bibles are
available on the **BibleSA app**.

ISBN 978-0-7982-1782-8



9 780798 217828