

# SAVIOR SERVANT FRIEND

DEVOTIONS FOR LENT



A. TREVOR SUTTON

ASH WEDNESDAY  
A FRIEND TO THE END

I am he who blots out your transgressions...

ISAIAH 43:25

Sometimes the “i” and the “e” end up in the wrong place and we misspell the word “friend.” To fix this, simply remember that a true friend sticks with you to the end. In Jesus, you have a friend to the end. There is no end to the forgiveness of Jesus. Though Ash Wednesday is the start of Lent, it is also a time to rejoice in the endless friendship of Jesus. The next time you spell the word “friend,” remember that in Jesus you have a forgiving friend to the end.

*Praise to you, Jesus, for your friendship and forgiveness have no end. Amen.*

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THURSDAY AFTER ASH WEDNESDAY  
UNENDING FORGIVENESS

Jesus said to him, “I do not say to you seven times, but seventy-seven times.”

MATTHEW 18:22

Geologists estimate that there are 7,500,000,000,000,000 grains of sand on earth. This is only an estimate since nobody can count every grain of sand—there’s simply too many! When asked about the amount of forgiveness that there is in the Kingdom of God, Jesus proclaimed grace upon grace and unending forgiveness. Through the cross and the empty tomb, Jesus offers forgiveness that surpasses all the sand on earth and stars in the sky. Though our sins are too many to count, our Savior has covered every one of them with his unending forgiveness.

*What a forgiver I have in you, Jesus. Amen.*

THEME OF THE WEEK  
FORGIVER

## FRIDAY AFTER ASH WEDNESDAY SCANDALOUS GRACE

Who can forgive sins but God alone?

MARK 2:7

Jesus had a scandalous reputation throughout Judea. Yet, it wasn't overturning tables and clearing the temple of money changers that gave him this reputation. It wasn't only the company he kept—fishermen, tax collectors and prostitutes—that goaded all the gossip. Rather, the most scandalous work of Jesus was the most gracious work of Jesus: forgiveness.

People throughout all Judea were shocked to hear Jesus declare, "... your sins are forgiven" (Mark 2:5). The reason for their surprise and scandal was that God alone can forgive sins. If Jesus was forgiving people, then he was declaring himself to be God.

Could it really be that God had come into his own creation to speak a personal word of forgiveness to sinners? YES! Jesus came near to speak an intimate word of forgiveness to you. Jesus continues to draw near to you in your sin and shame and says, "My friend, your sins are forgiven. Rise! Go your way today knowing that you are forgiven!"

*Jesus, your forgiveness allows me to rise up and live as one forgiven by you.  
Amen.*

## SATURDAY AFTER ASH WEDNESDAY

# SIN LIFTED

Blessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.

PSALM 32:1

Oganesson is the heaviest of all elements on the periodic table. This heavy-weight champion of the scientific world has an atomic weight that surpasses gold, lead and all other elements. Little is known about this sneaky element because roughly five atoms have ever been created in a laboratory—and it decays within milliseconds. Oganesson is heavy, invisible and sneaky.

Like oganesson, sin is heavy, invisible and sneaky. It sneaks and slithers, decaying all that it touches. Heavier than anything in all of God's creation, unrepented sin presses down on your heart and bones: "For when I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long" (Psalm 32:3).

What a forgiver you have in Jesus! He lifts the weight of sin from your heart, soul and bones. Lifted onto the cross for you, Jesus removes the heavy load of your sins. The weight of sin evaporates when you declare, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD and you forgave the iniquity of my sin" (Psalm 32:5).

*Jesus, take away the weight of my sin. Amen.*

FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT  
A HEAVENLY HEALER

Upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed.

ISAIAH 53:5

Dr. Edward Jenner, often known as “the father of immunology,” brought healing to a world ravaged by smallpox. At a time when smallpox brought death to many, Jenner developed an immunization for the virus that saved an untold number of lives. How did he do it? By coming into contact with the virus himself.

More severe than smallpox, sin brings death to all. Even worse, there is no earthly remedy for removing the plague of sin and the sorrow that it brings. And, so, who will all our sorrows share? Our heavenly healer, Jesus!

On the cross, Jesus came into contact with the plague of sin. His blood has cured us of our sin. Like a physician taking the place of a patient, Jesus has taken the viral load of your sin and cured you through the empty tomb. Look to your wounded healer, Jesus, and you will find solace there.

*Heal me, Jesus, from the plague of sin. Amen.*

THEME OF THE WEEK  
HEALER

## MONDAY, THE FIRST WEEK OF LENT

# MERCY BEYOND NUMBER

My mouth will tell of your righteous acts, of your deeds of salvation all the day, for their number is past my knowledge.

PSALM 71:15

How old were you when you started learning arithmetic? You probably began by learning addition. Then you went on to master subtraction, multiplication and division.

Life teaches us its own arithmetic. Hurts are added on to other hurts, so the sum total of daily life is pain. Sadness can subtract away from happiness and leave you with an excess of struggle. A friend can divide struggles to make a load more bearable while loneliness can multiply our grief.

Jesus—your friend through the hurts of life—has the power to change life's arithmetic. The healing sacrifice of Jesus is counted as yours through faith. The victory of Jesus through the cross and empty tomb has resulted in a sum of salvation for you! What a healer we have in Jesus as he subtracts our sins, divides our grief and multiplies our joy. Jesus promises that his healing mercy is greater than you can number!

*Jesus, count me as one of your friends. Amen.*

TUESDAY, THE FIRST WEEK OF LENT  
JESUS IS THE CURE

Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace.

LUKE 8:48

Time heals all wounds...except when it doesn't. There are many wounds in life—physical or emotional—that cannot be healed by the treatment of time. Disease or the death of a loved one, betrayal or broken relationships, trauma or shame can all linger longer than we expect. To our dismay, the miracle cure of time does nothing to cut the pain of these hurts.

Jesus does not buy into the myth that time heals all wounds. When Jesus encountered a woman who had waited over a decade for healing, he did not tell her that the cure was more time. Jesus was her cure. Healing came from the wounded healer who was journeying to the cross for the sins of the world. Jesus treated our hurts by taking them to the cross, tossing them in the tomb and triumphing over every hurt when he left the tomb empty. A cure better than time, healing happens in Jesus. In his healing arms, you will find hope and solace.

*Heal my hurts, Lord Jesus, as only you can. Amen.*

# SAVIOR • SERVANT FRIEND

Lent provides us with a perfect chance to explore the extraordinary attributes of our Savior, Servant, Friend, who is Jesus, and marvel at the blessings we receive from his suffering, death and resurrection. Devotions in this daily devotional for Lent dwell upon what it means to have such a close relationship with such an amazing Lord.



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1564 Fencorp Dr., Fenton, MO 63026  
800-325-9414 • [www.creativecommunications.com](http://www.creativecommunications.com) **SR4**

