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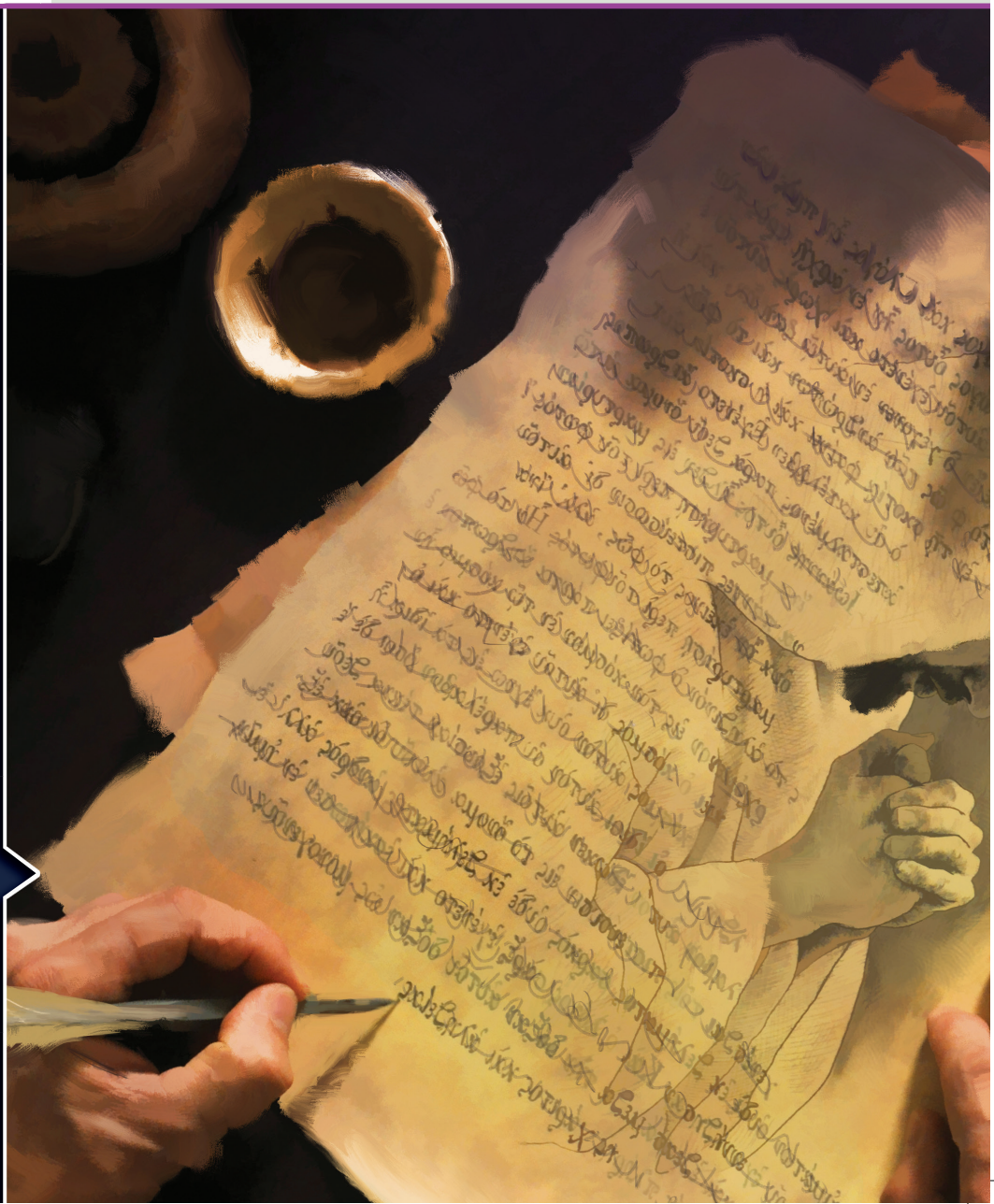
Through Thick and Thin

Key References: Luke 23:26-56; Matthew 27:45-56; *The Desire of Ages*, chap. 78, pp. 741-764; *The Bible Story* (1994), vol. 9, pp. 105-109; Our Beliefs, nos. 9, 14, 12







Sabbath

DO Do the activity on page 19.

LEARN Begin learning the power text.

power**text**

"Thus says the Lord of hosts: 'Execute true justice, show mercy and compassion everyone to his brother' " (Zechariah 7:9).

power**point**

Like Jesus, we can care for others even when we face difficulties.

Is it possible to trust God so much that you can forget about your troubles and show love and compassion to another person?

The story of Jesus being led to His crucifixion is one of trust in God. Jesus had studied the prophecies and He knew He would sacrifice His life to save humanity. Yet He trusted God to guide His life. Even though the immediate circumstances were frightening and agonizing, His trust in God allowed Him to go meekly to the cross, as a lamb. Prophet Isaiah described this beautifully: "He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so He opened not His mouth" (Isaiah 53:7).

Jesus trusted in His Father even when arrested in the Garden of Gethsemane. Thoughtful of His disciples' welfare, He asked for their freedom. Even though He had secured their freedom, His disciples ran away, trying to escape. They left their Master at a time He needed them most. Then Peter, one of His disciples, denied Him.

Jesus' trust in God did not waver even when He was being insulted, mocked, falsely accused, and twice tortured by the scourge whip!

After the second whipping, the cross was put upon Him. He had not taken any food or drink since the Passover meal with His disciples. In addition, the scourging had drained Him of His energy. Being too weak to lift up the cross, Jesus fell. Again the cross was placed upon Him, and again He fell under its weight. Still, Jesus continued to trust His Father.

The crowd that followed and watched as Jesus fell, bleeding and

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Sunday

READ Read Luke 23:26-43 and this week's story, "Through Thick and Thin."

LEARN Begin to learn the power text, Zechariah 7:9.

THINK How would you feel if one of your close friends were dying? How would you reach out to that person?

PRAY Thank Jesus for being willing to suffer for us.

Monday

READ Read Luke 23:44-49.

THINK Why did Jesus accept the path of suffering and humiliation that led to His sacrificial death on the cross?

PLAN Plan ways to encourage someone this week.

REVIEW Review the power text.

PRAY Ask God for ideas of how you can reach out and encourage someone today.

Tuesday

READ Read Matthew 27:45-56.

SING Sing the hymn "The Old Rugged Cross" at worship.

THINK What did people recognize when they saw the unusual things taking place in nature when Jesus died?

REVIEW Review the power text.

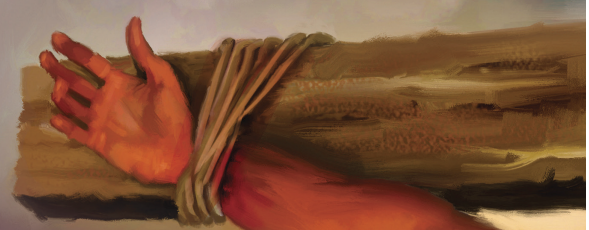
PRAY Thank God for the people who are close to us when we are going through difficult times.

in terrible pain, showed no compassion. They yelled and taunted Him, saying "Make way for the King of the Jews!"

A Cyrenian man by the name of Simon saw what was happening and stopped in astonishment. Seeing his compassion, the soldiers grabbed him and forced him to carry the cross for Jesus.

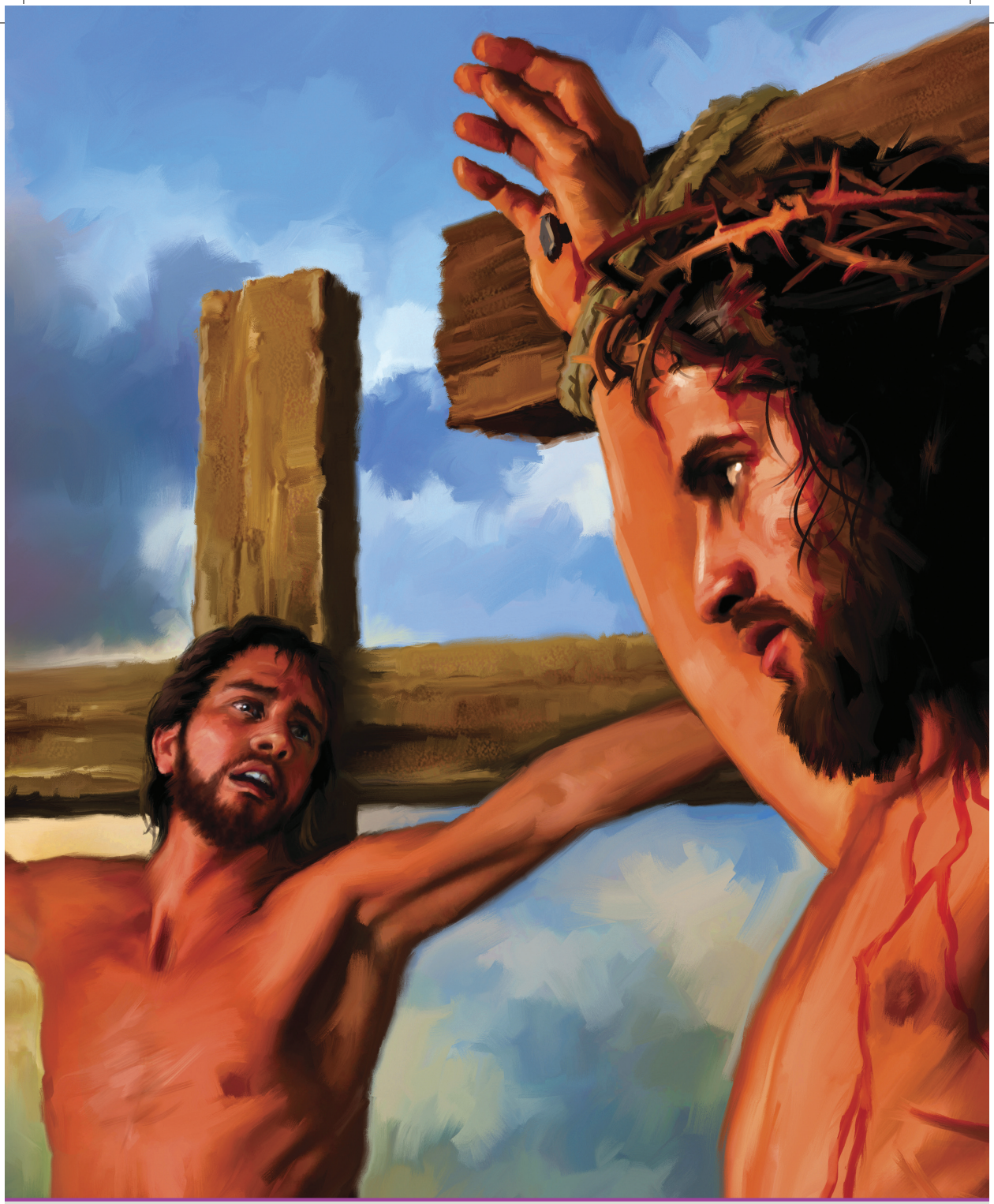
Women in the crowd who had seen Jesus fall under the weight of the cross began to wail and cry loudly. Though they were expressing pity for Him, Jesus knew they did not believe in Him as the Son of God. Desiring to lead them to the Father, He took one last opportunity to warn them of the coming destruction of Jerusalem: "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for Me, but weep for yourselves and for your children" (Luke 23:28).

Jesus was able to look past the moment of torture, past the coming destruction of Jerusalem, and see the final destruction of the world. He said, "Then they will begin 'to say to the mountains, "Fall on us!" and to the hills, "Cover us!"'" (Luke 23:30; Hosea 10:8). Even at that trying time, right before His death, Jesus reached out in love and warning, "not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9).



Even on the cross, as the nails were piercing His hands and feet, Jesus thought of His persecutors. He did not protest; He

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Wednesday

READ Read Matthew 27:37; Mark 15:26; Luke 23:38; and John 19:19.

THINK What is the significance of the sign that was placed at the top of Jesus' cross?

ASK Ask an adult to share about a time someone who was hurting cared for others.

REVIEW Review the power text.

PRAY Thank God for friends who reach out to you. Ask God to help you reach out to those who hurt.

Thursday

READ Read Luke 23:50-56.

THINK What risks did Joseph of Arimathea take in asking for the body of Jesus?

DO Do what you planned on Monday to comfort or encourage someone this week.

REVIEW Review the power text.

PRAY Ask God for wisdom to carry out your plan.

Friday

READ Read 2 Corinthians 1:3, 4.

ACT Act out the Bible story for family worship.

SAY Repeat the power text by memory.

THINK Do you think the thief on the cross knew about Jesus beforehand, or believed in Him because of His conduct while being crucified?

PRAY Ask Jesus to give you the strength to do His will even when you are in distress.

desired no vengeance. Instead, He pitied them for the consequences that would result from their rejection of Him. He prayed, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do" (Luke 23:34). What a magnificent evidence of the depth of Jesus' care, love, and forgiveness for those who tortured Him. Jesus not only taught but showed in the deepest sense what it means to love our enemies. In that He is our supreme example.

Crucified with Him were two thieves, one on each side. Both heard the scorn and ridicule of the priests. Both heard Jesus pray forgiveness for His persecutors. Both witnessed His peaceful submission to unjust torture. As one thief joined in taunting Jesus, the other was convicted that Jesus was the the Son of God. With him Jesus shared words of forgiveness, promise, and hope: "Assuredly, I say to you today, you will be with Me in Paradise" (Luke 23:43).

Finally, Jesus looked down at His heartbroken mother. In His dying hour He committed her to the care of His trusted disciple, John. What a remarkable evidence of filial love!

Jesus is our perfect example. Even in His hour of dying, He was still pleading for forgiveness for others; still lovingly offering salvation to a sorrowing thief; still ministering to those needing care. Wouldn't it be wonderful if every Christian followed the example of Jesus? "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 2:5).

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PUZZLE 2

BE LIKE ONESIMUS, THE "USEFUL ONE."

Instructions: Below is a list of names (with their meanings) with the first letter missing from each name. Reading down, the first letters spell out a Bible verse that teaches us how to treat our brothers and sisters in Christ. Can you find the Bible verse? This verse is from the King James Version.

___imothy, one who knows God
___osea, salvation
___uth, friendship
___rpah, fawn
___riah, God is my light
___abriel, God is my strength
___annah, graciousness

___eah, cow
___bed, worshipper, servant
___ashni, the second
___phraim, fruitful; increasing

___eth, appointed, substituted
___lijah, the Lord is my God
___hoda, a rose
___ashti, the desired one
___sther, star

___badiah, servant of the Lord
___athan, God has given
___noch, dedicated; disciplined

___dam, earthy; red
___ehemiah, God is consolation
___nesimus, profitable; useful
___homas, a twin
___ezekiah, Salvation
___sau, hairy
___achel, ewe

"___ ___."

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