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Love on a Tree

Key References: Matthew 27:27-66; Luke 23:26-49; *The Desire of Ages*, chap. 78, pp. 741-757; chap. 79, pp. 758-764; *The Bible Story* (1994), vol. 9, pp. 105-117; Our Beliefs nos. 10, 9, 4



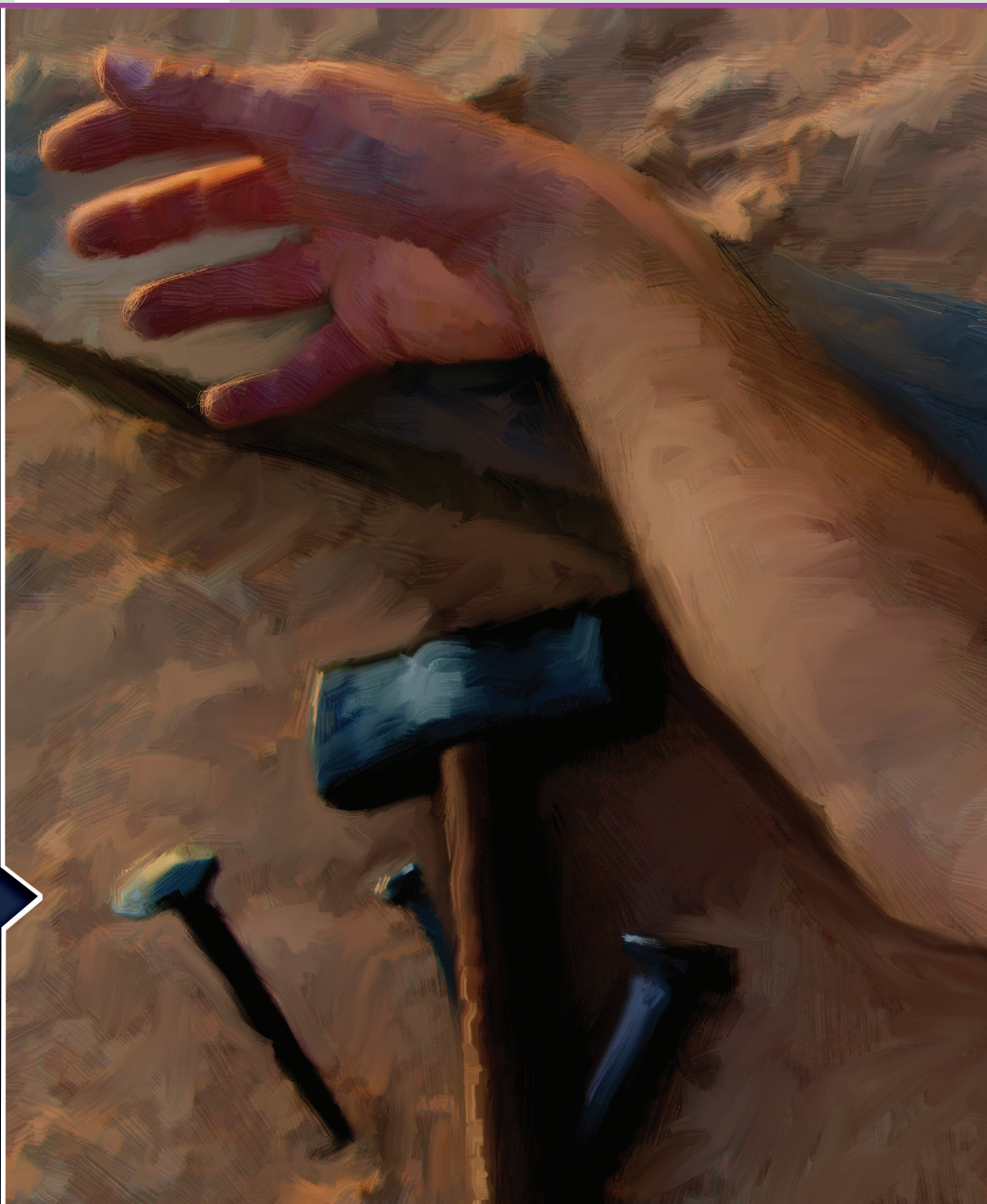












power**text**

"When the centurion and those with him who were guarding Jesus saw the earthquake and all that had happened, they were terrified, and exclaimed, 'Surely he was the Son of God!'" (Matthew 27:54).

power**point**

Like Jesus, we can share God's love with anyone, anywhere.

Have you ever been in pain? You just wanted to be left alone, didn't you? What would it take for you to be able to reach out to someone else while you are in pain?

Jesus' followers wanted to forget the horror of Pilate's court. Jesus had been beaten, and the soldiers had mocked and insulted Him. People had even spit in Jesus' face. Now He was going to die on a cross. The people following Jesus, many of whom He had healed, couldn't believe what He had gone through. And yet He had not shown any resistance.

Finally, the group reached the top of Golgotha, the Place of the Skull. The surprised followers saw a large crowd gathered on the hill. Many people who had followed Jesus had come to see Him one last time. They were wailing in grief. But others were mocking Him. Two other prisoners, convicted thieves, already lay on crosses on the ground.

The soldiers roughly took Jesus' cross and threw it on the ground. They stripped Jesus of His cloak and pushed Him onto the cross. As Jesus' weakened frame lay on the rough wood of the cross, the crown of thorns sank deeper into His head. Fresh blood flowed onto His already bruised, battered, and bloody face. Yet Jesus was still, waiting for the Roman soldiers to finish their cruel work.

Sabbath

DO Do the activity on page 89.

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Sunday

READ Read Luke 23:26-34 and this week's lesson, "Love on a Tree."

THINK Think of how crucifying Jesus may have impacted the soldiers who nailed Him to the cross.

REVIEW Review the power text, Matthew 27:54.

PRAY Pray that you may share the story of the cross.

Monday

READ Read Luke 23:35-49.

THINK How would you have felt if you were watching Jesus die on the cross?

WRITE Write your answer in your Bible study journal.

REVIEW Review the power text.

PRAY Thank Jesus for His sacrificial death on the cross, which offers you salvation.

Tuesday

READ Read Matthew 27:33-44.

THINK Think about the crucifixion of Jesus and about the great pain He endured to offer you eternal life.

SHARE Talk about Jesus' matchless love and infinite sacrifice for our salvation.

REVIEW Review the power text.

PRAY Pray that you may share God's love with anyone.

Two of the soldiers knelt on either side of Jesus' arms. Each held a thick metal spike in his hand. The soldiers positioned the spikes over Jesus' wrists. Together they raised their hammers into the air and then brought them down to make contact with the spikes. Jesus' followers turned away, but they couldn't escape the sound. *Clang. Clang. Clang.* As the hammers beat against the spikes, the sound reverberated across the hilltop. The soldiers moved to Jesus' feet, placing one on top of the other. One soldier held a spike as the other raised the hammer. Again Jesus' followers looked away. Again the sound penetrated to their core. *Clang. Clang. Clang.* The followers marveled that Jesus never said a word as the soldiers drove the thick spikes into His flesh. When the echo of the hammers and spikes had subsided, those close to the scene heard Jesus speak.

"Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing" (Luke 23:34). His followers drew in their breath, and tears sprang to their eyes as they witnessed Jesus' words of forgiveness.

As the soldiers roughly lifted the crosses with their human burdens upright, one could see Jesus' back. It was all torn from the whips the soldiers had used on Him. His raw flesh ached profoundly as it came in contact with the rough wood of the cross. Still He said nothing.



Wednesday

READ Read Mark 15:22-32.

RECORD In your Bible study journal, describe the scene taking place at Jesus' crucifixion, referring to the soldiers, priests, common people, disciples, and Jesus' mother.

SHARE Like Jesus, you can share God's love with anyone, anywhere.

REVIEW Review the power text.

PRAY Praise God for the call to tell others about His love.

Thursday

READ Read John 19:17-24.

WRITE Using your Bible study journal, write a paragraph or two about your experience with God.

TESTIFY Memorize it so you can testify of—that is, share—your experience with Jesus with other people.

REVIEW Review the power text.

PRAY Ask Jesus to help you share your testimony with someone who has not yet experienced Jesus' great love.

Friday

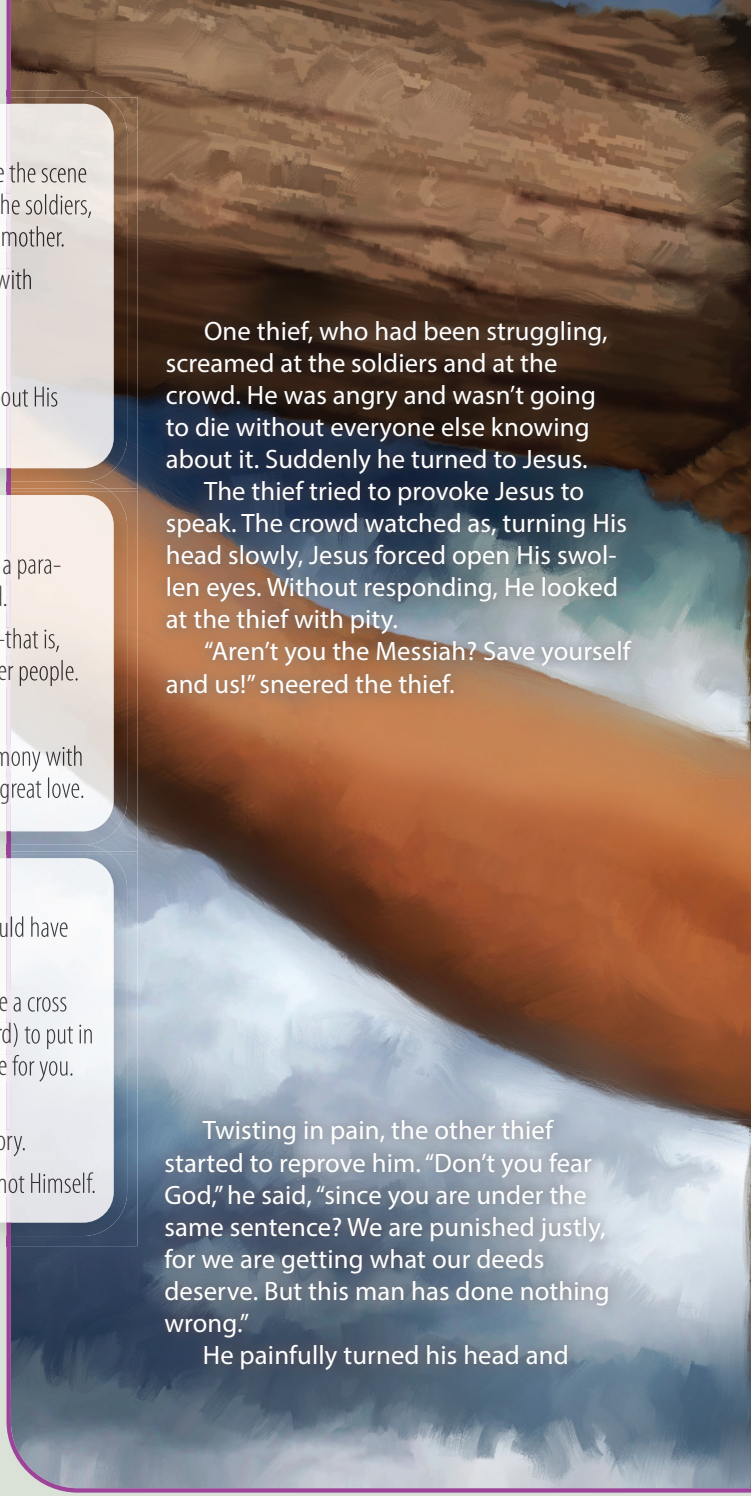
READ Read John 3:16, 17.

THINK How would our future be if Jesus would have decided not to die for us on the cross?

CREATE Using materials in your home, create a cross (or find a nail and glue it to wood or cardboard) to put in a special place to remind you of Jesus' sacrifice for you. Share your creation at family worship.

REPEAT Say your power text aloud by memory.

PRAY Thank Jesus that He chose to save us, not Himself.



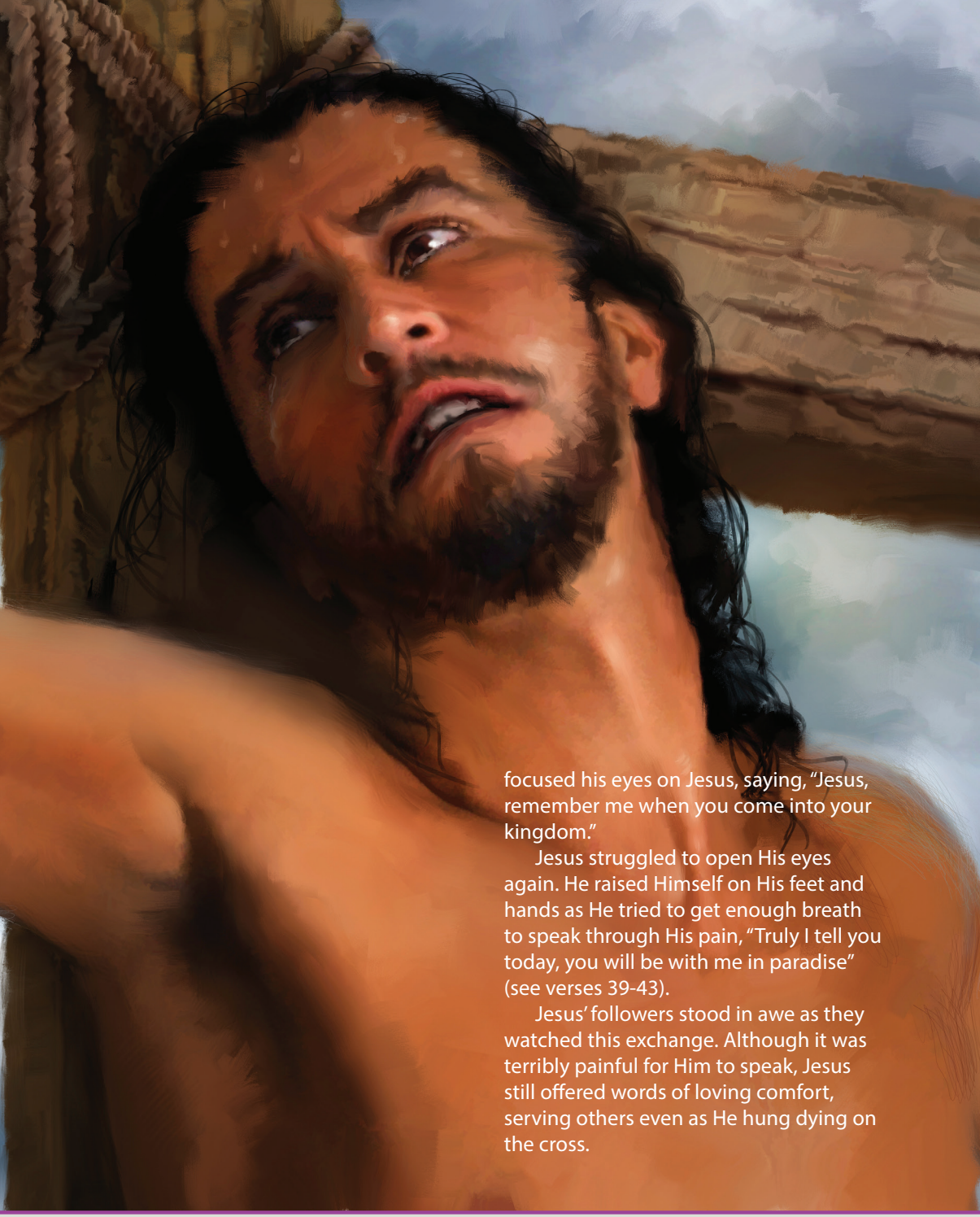
One thief, who had been struggling, screamed at the soldiers and at the crowd. He was angry and wasn't going to die without everyone else knowing about it. Suddenly he turned to Jesus.

The thief tried to provoke Jesus to speak. The crowd watched as, turning His head slowly, Jesus forced open His swollen eyes. Without responding, He looked at the thief with pity.

"Aren't you the Messiah? Save yourself and us!" sneered the thief.

Twisting in pain, the other thief started to reprove him. "Don't you fear God," he said, "since you are under the same sentence? We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve. But this man has done nothing wrong."

He painfully turned his head and



focused his eyes on Jesus, saying, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom."

Jesus struggled to open His eyes again. He raised Himself on His feet and hands as He tried to get enough breath to speak through His pain, "Truly I tell you today, you will be with me in paradise" (see verses 39-43).

Jesus' followers stood in awe as they watched this exchange. Although it was terribly painful for Him to speak, Jesus still offered words of loving comfort, serving others even as He hung dying on the cross.