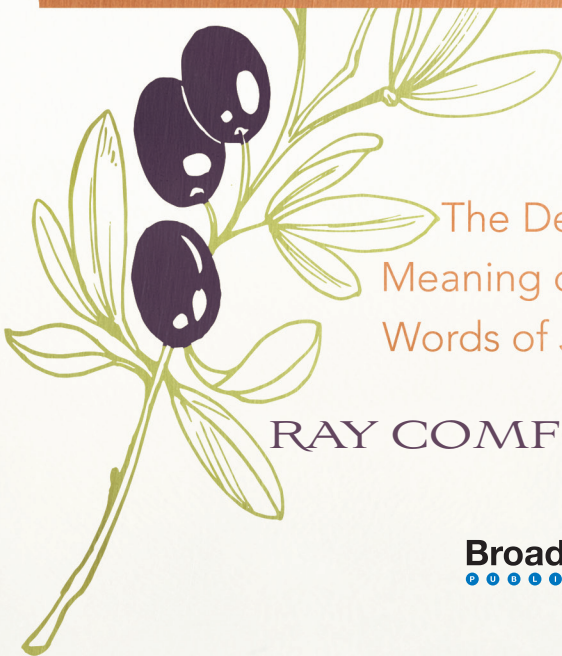


An illustration of an olive branch with several elongated, pointed leaves, rendered in a light green line-art style. It is positioned at the top of the cover, partially overlapping the title banner.

JESUS AMPLIFIED

A detailed illustration of an olive branch with several dark purple olives and light green leaves. The branch is positioned on the left side of the cover, extending from the bottom towards the center.

The Deeper
Meaning of the
Words of Jesus

RAY COMFORT

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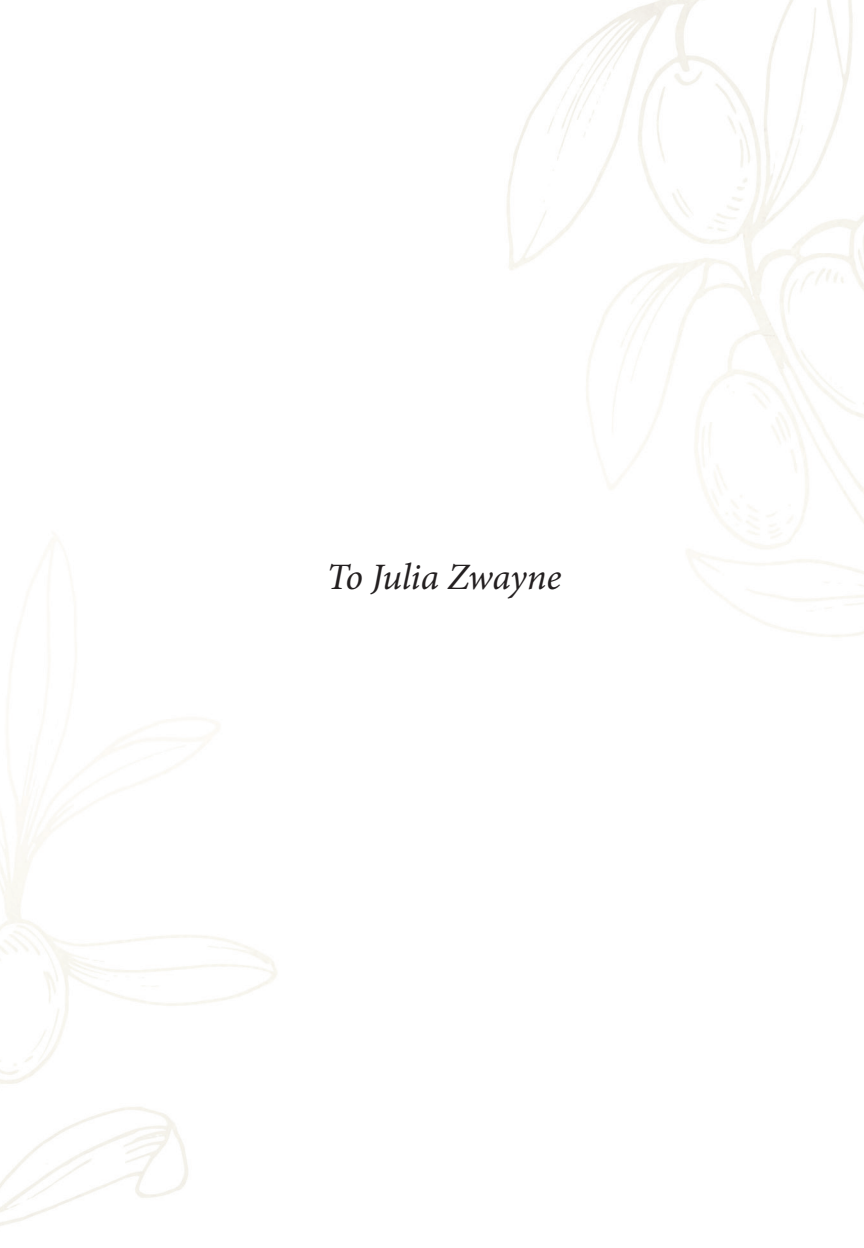
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The page features faint, light-colored line drawings of olive branches. One branch with several olives is in the top right corner, and another branch with a single olive and leaves is in the bottom left corner. The central text is positioned between these two illustrations.

To Julia Zwayne



Introduction

I have always loved the Amplified Bible. It gives me a different perspective on Scripture passages with which I had become very familiar.

For that different perspective, take the English word “love.” When texting first started using the “love heart” emoji, it took some time for me to feel comfortable sending it to men. This is because there is only one word for “love” in English. But the Greek language has an amazing eight different words.¹ Let’s look at three.

Eros is the type of love that involves passion, lust, or romance. *Philia* is an affectionate love. *Philia* is the type of love that involves friendship. It is *philia* that I’m expressing to men when texting the love heart. Then there is *agape*. *Agape* is often defined as an unconditional, sacrificial love, and that word expresses the love that God has for us.

It’s because of the richness of the Greek language and my love for Jesus that I have thoroughly enjoyed combining the two in *Jesus Amplified*. I hope you enjoy it as well.

Also, I would like to express my special thanks to Brad Snow for his work in generating the amazing pictures in this devotional.

May God bless and keep all of you.

Ray Comfort

September 2024

1 “8 Greek Words for Love That Will Make Your Heart Soar,” Dictionary.com, March 28, 2024, <https://www.dictionary.com/e/greek-words-for-love>.

January



The temptation of Jesus in the wilderness (Matthew 4:1–11)

Permitting Things in Life

Jesus replied to him, "Permit it just now; for this is the fitting way for us to fulfill all righteousness." Then John permitted it [and baptized Him].

MATTHEW 3:15

The event in today's Scripture passage happened when Jesus met John the Baptist at the River Jordan. John had been preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. When Jesus approached him to be baptized, John was initially reluctant. He recognized that Jesus was without sin and felt unworthy to baptize him. By submitting to baptism, Jesus was identifying with the sinful humanity he came to save. This prefigured his sacrificial death on the cross, where he fully identified with human sin and took it upon himself.

Sometimes we have to permit things to happen in life even when they make no sense. John had been baptizing sinners who came to him confessing their sins. It made sense for him to do that. But Jesus said, "Permit it just now." When logic and reason leave us, faith fills in the vacuum. And that's fitting. All is well. There's peace in the storm because God is in control. He has a plan, and we submit to his infinite wisdom because we are his.

Father, when I can't see the future, I gladly take hold of your faithful hand.

It Was Written Forever

Jesus replied, "It is written and forever remains written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes out of the mouth of God.'"

MATTHEW

The devil had tempted Jesus to turn stones into fresh bread. But Jesus resisted the temptation and quoted the Scriptures. All Scripture is written by the inspiration of God and is profitable (2 Timothy 3:16), and when God writes something, as Jesus said, "Scripture cannot be broken" (John 10:35 KJV). And that's what Jesus was saying here.

In other words, if it was divinely inspired it is utterly reliable because, like God, Scripture doesn't change. He is as good as his Word. How wonderful it is that in such a changing world—where we can't trust that what is said to be true today will still be considered true tomorrow—the Bible is true forever. The eternal Bread of Life was broken for us. He fully became a human being and dwelled among us so we could eat of the bread of heaven both now and forevermore.

Father, my heart beats with never-ending gratitude for Jesus and the cross.

On the Other Hand

Jesus said to him, “On the other hand, it is written and forever remains written, ‘You shall not test the Lord your God.’”

MATTHEW 4:7, QUOTING DEUTERONOMY 6:16

Jesus had been led by the Holy Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. This temptation occurred after Jesus had been fasting for forty days and nights. The Bible tells us that he was hungry. If we went for forty days and nights without food, most of us would be more than hungry. We would be close to death, depending on our state of health. And it was at that low point for Jesus that the Enemy came to him and said, “If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread” (Matthew 4:3 NKJV).

It is when we are at our lowest point that the Enemy will whisper to us to do something we know that would cause God to frown. Perhaps it's a temptation to allow bitterness, revenge, anger, hatred, greed, or lust have its way. Don't do it! Instead, “submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you” (James 4:7 NKJV). Always look beyond the Father of Lies to your Father in heaven.

Father, help me always submit to your will first and resist the will of the devil.

It Forever Remains

Jesus said to him, “Go away, Satan! For it is written and forever remains written, ‘You shall worship the LORD your God, and serve Him only.’”

MATTHEW 4:10, QUOTING DEUTERONOMY 6:13

The temptation in the wilderness was intense for forty days and forty nights. Satan had tempted Jesus in the area of his appetite by suggesting that he turn stones to bread. Then he tempted Jesus to take his own life, and finally the devil offered Jesus the world—if he would become a Satan worshipper. But you should never listen to the Father of Lies. Rather, listen to Scripture:

Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that *is* in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. (1 John 2:15–16 NKJV)

Whatever you do in this life, don’t be tempted to listen to the whispering of the devil. If we love this evil world, we are bowing to the god of this world—Satan.

Father, never let me be tempted to love this sinful world. Deliver me from evil.

Regret Past Sins

From that time Jesus began to preach and say, “Repent [change your inner self—your old way of thinking, regret past sins, live your life in a way that proves repentance; seek God’s purpose for your life], for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”

MATTHEW 4:17

Some wrongly believe that repentance isn’t a turning from sin but a turning from unbelief to believing in Jesus. In other words, they think repentance has nothing to do with the sins of lying, stealing, greed, hatred, blasphemy, fornication, adultery, and idolatry. But the Scriptures make it clear that repentance is turning from sins (plural):

- “Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out” (Acts 3:19 KJV; this refers to “sins,” not to the “sin” of unbelief).
- “Unto you first God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities” (Acts 3:26 KJV; “iniquities” is plural, not the singular sin of unbelief).
- “It behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins [plural] should be preached in his name among all nations” (Luke 24:46–47 KJV).

Father, help me always to follow the example of Jesus by preaching that sinners must turn from their sin.

He Didn't Say That

He said to them, "Follow Me [as My disciples, accepting Me as your Master and Teacher and walking the same path of life that I walk], and I will make you fishers of men."

MATTHEW

Jesus could have said, "Follow me and you will see people miraculously healed. You will be eyewitnesses of the blind seeing and the deaf hearing. You will also see people raised from the dead—as well as seeing me walk on water and have the stormy wind and the sea obey me." But he didn't say that.

Instead he chose to state the ultimate reason for him being born. He had come to seek and save that which was lost. He came to fish for men, and if we are following him, that should be our number one priority. We mustn't forget the reason that God gave his Holy Spirit to the church: to give us power to reach the lost. "You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth" (Acts 1:8 NKJV).

Father, never let fear or wrong priorities cause me to neglect the Great Commission.

I Am Rich

“Blessed [spiritually prosperous, happy, to be admired] are the poor in spirit [those devoid of spiritual arrogance, those who regard themselves as insignificant], for theirs is the kingdom of heaven [both now and forever].”

MATTHEW 5:3

We are highly favored when we see ourselves in truth—that we are poor in spirit. We know that we can do nothing and are nothing without God. He gave us the very breath we breathe. But those are to be pitied who claim to be rich and in need of nothing, not knowing that they are “wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked” (Revelation 3:17 NKJV). But that is the delusion of self-righteousness. Like the rich young ruler, who in essence proclaimed his own goodness, we need the law to humble us and expose our shame.

Such understanding causes us to thirst after the righteousness of God in Christ. Blessed are those who have the light of that understanding because that is our first step toward the cross. The law acts as a schoolmaster to bring us to Christ (Galatians 3:24).

Father, it is the revelation of my sinful state that causes me to trust in grace alone and not in my works.

Sins Forgiven and Forgotten

“Blessed [forgiven, refreshed by God’s grace] are those who mourn [over their sins and repent], for they will be comforted [when the burden of sin is lifted].”

MATTHEW 5:4

Listen to Scripture address the careless sinner as he enjoys the pleasures of sin for a season:

Draw near to God and He will draw near to you.
Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Lament and mourn and weep! Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. (James 4:8–9 NKJV)

The prodigal son had his season of laughter, but famine left him miserable as he sat alone in the pigsty. God’s law puts the careless, sin-embracing sinner alone in the pigsty, helping him to see that his appetites are unclean.

What a paradox that we mourn over sin but at the same time rejoice with joy unspeakable because God no longer sees those sins. The prodigal son no doubt never forgot the pigsty after he returned to enjoy his father’s kindness. He had a robe over his shoulders, a ring on his finger, and a fatted calf as evidence that all was forgiven and forgotten.

Father, I am ever thankful that my sins are forgiven and forgotten by you.

They Are Strong

“Blessed [inwardly peaceful, spiritually secure, worthy of respect] are the gentle [the kind-hearted, the sweet-spirited, the self-controlled], for they will inherit the earth.”

MATTHEW 5:5

The world considers the meek to be weak, like a tiny trembling mouse trapped helplessly in the corner of a large room. But the meek are strong because they trust in God (2 Corinthians 12:9–11). Their feet are fixed firmly upon the immutable promises of the God who cannot lie (Hebrews 6:18). Their meekness also rests in the knowledge that God is for them. Nothing makes them panic because they are spiritually secure on the Rock of Ages. And in that strength, they manifest the fruit of the Spirit. “The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law” (Galatians 5:22–23 NKJV).

Jesus said that he was both meek and lowly of heart (Matthew 11:29). That state was his strength, and it is our strength as we trust solely in him. “What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?” (Romans 8:31 NKJV).

Father, weak though I am, in you I am strong because you favor me in Christ.

The Water That Satisfies

“Blessed [joyful, nourished by God’s goodness] are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness [those who actively seek right standing with God], for they will be [completely] satisfied.”

MATTHEW 5:6

In John 4, the woman at the well came to draw water, not knowing who would be waiting for her. When she met Jesus, she was mystified that he, as a Jew, would talk to her, an outcast Samaritan, and ask her for a drink. It was then when Jesus spoke of the water that completely satisfies—the Water of Life.

The burning sun often causes human beings to thirst for water. And it is the heat of God’s law showing sinners their desperate state before a holy God that causes us to thirst for righteousness. Until we are confronted by our sin, we do not thirst for God or for righteousness. The Scriptures tell us that there is none who seek after God and that the only thing we thirst for is iniquity, which we drink in like water. That’s why the moral law is so important. That brings us the knowledge of sin and shows us that we desperately need God’s mercy.

Father, thank you so much for the law, which was a schoolmaster to bring me to Christ.

The Stealer of Contentment

“Blessed [content, sheltered by God’s promises] are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.”

MATTHEW 5:7

Nothing steals contentment like an unmerciful attitude. It’s the hidden eggshell in our omelet, and it shouldn’t be there for any Christian. If somebody sins against us and we don’t have a merciful attitude, what should be a molehill suddenly becomes a mountain that will cast a shadow over everything we do.

This world’s quest for happiness often ends in disillusionment because people miss the riches of contentment. They are in the continual pursuit of happiness, but we can be content with what we have because we have the promises of God today. There’s no need for any pursuit. These promises are more to be desired than gold—they are both precious and exceedingly great (1 Peter 1:4).

We are nothing more than forgiven wretched sinners, and because we know what we are, we should never allow an unmerciful attitude into our hearts. That’s why the merciful person is (as the original Greek language tells us) “blessed [content, sheltered by God’s promises].”

Father, I will be content with what I have because you said you’ll never leave nor forsake me.

Comfort in the Beatitudes

“Blessed [anticipating God’s presence, spiritually mature] are the pure in heart [those with integrity, moral courage, and godly character], for they will see God.”

MATTHEW 5:8

While the Christian (because of God’s grace) can take comfort from the Beatitudes, when we look at them outside of God’s mercy in Christ, they condemn us. The Scriptures ask:

Who may ascend into the hill of the LORD?
Or who may stand in His holy place?
He who has clean hands and a pure heart,
Who has not lifted up his soul to an idol,
Nor sworn deceitfully. (Psalm 24:3–4 NKJV)

Those who think they are going to heaven and will see God *because* they have a pure heart will be sorely disappointed. Even the best person among us isn’t pure of heart. “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?” (Jeremiah 17:9 NKJV).

A person who believes he is pure in heart is one who has lifted up his soul to an idol. The popular image the world has of God is one of a bearded man in the sky—just one of many idolatrous conceptions of the infinite, almighty God. We can control and manipulate our idols. After all, we created them! But if we want to know the true God, we must move beyond our false beliefs about him and embrace what his Word teaches us about the great “I AM” (Exodus 3:14).

Father, help me to always see you as Holy Scripture portrays you.

Beautiful Feet

“Blessed [spiritually calm with life-joy in God’s favor] are the makers and maintainers of peace, for they will [express His character and] be called the sons of God.”

MATTHEW 5:9

The Bible speaks of different types of peace. It tells us about a peace that passes all understanding. This is the peace that is one of the fruits of the Holy Spirit. There is a peace that is the absence of noise, and there’s the type of peace that is the absence of war.

Christians are called to be peacemakers, and our aim is to bring about peace between man and God. “How shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: ‘How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, who bring glad tidings of good things!’” (Romans 10:15 NKJV). While we would commend those who want to stop noise or bring a halt to the tragedy of wars, heaven commends those who preach the gospel of peace. It even says that the lowliest (and arguably ugliest) parts of our body, our feet, are beautiful if we preach the gospel of peace.

Father, help me to be faithful to proclaim the good news of the gospel.

All Who Live Godly Shall Suffer

“Blessed [comforted by inner peace and God’s love] are those who are persecuted for doing that which is morally right, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven [both now and forever].”

MATTHEW 5:10

The sinful world resists God for the same reason darkness resists light—it exposes what is hidden and calls for change. Yet standing for God and his righteousness brings immense blessing.

The Bible assures us that “all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution” (2 Timothy 3:12 NKJV). But this is not a cause for despair; it is a badge of honor. When you side with God, you are his ambassador, shining his love and truth. The world may reject you, but heaven celebrates your faithfulness, and you are blessed because of it.

The apostles in Acts rejoiced in suffering for Christ. Stephen, as he was stoned, saw the heavens open. James, though struck down by the king’s sword, received his eternal reward. Paul endured beatings and trials but found joy in his mission, knowing his faithfulness glorified God.

To suffer for Christ is to be blessed, for it identifies you with his victory, his righteousness, and his eternal kingdom.

Father, help me always to rejoice in the midst of persecution.



About the Author

Ray Comfort is the best-selling author of more than one hundred books. He is the cohost of an award-winning television program that airs in 190 countries and the producer of award-winning movies that have been viewed by millions (see www.FullyFreeFilms.com). He lives in Southern California with his wife, Sue, and has three grown children. For more information, visit LivingWaters.com.

