

## FLYING HIGH

READ: PSALM 37:5-7; ROMANS 8:38-39

James watched the red kite soaring in the bright sky. His big brother Michael grinned. “Don’t you wish we could take off and fly like that?” Michael asked.

“Yeah!” James grinned back. “But if I were that kite, I wouldn’t want the string to hold me down. I’d want to fly away, high above the clouds.”

Michael laughed. “But if you broke loose, you’d crash to the ground instead of flying away. Without the string, that kite would just fall down.”

James turned to his father. “Would it, Daddy?”

“Yep,” said Dad. “If that string broke, or if you let go of it, the kite would soon fall.”

“Oh.” James’s small hands clutched the spool of string, trying to make sure his kite didn’t get away.

“You know,” Dad mused, “in a way, we’re something like that kite. Even though the kite dips and swerves in the gusts of air, the string keeps it from falling. It holds the kite steady in the wind so it can fly high. Jesus does the same thing for us. He holds us steady when things happen in our lives that blow against us.”

“You mean bad things, don’t you?” said Michael. “Like when I sprained my ankle last month.”

Dad nodded. “Or when I lost my job last year.”

“Or when I had to miss the last day of kindergarten because I got sick,” said James.

Dad smiled and tousled James’s hair. “Yes, things like that. Even though difficult things happen in our lives, we can face them knowing Jesus is holding on to us.”

“What if Jesus lets us go?” asked James, wide-eyed.

“He’ll never do that, James. If you trust in Jesus as your Savior, He’ll never let you go,” Dad assured him. “He died for our sins and rose again so we could be God’s children, and the Bible says that nothing can ever separate us from His love. When hard things happen in our lives, we don’t have to be afraid of falling. Jesus will hold us steady and guide us through life’s difficulties so we can soar.” ♥

JUDITH K. BOOGAART

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### JESUS NEVER LETS GO

**KEY VERSE:** NOTHING IN ALL CREATION WILL EVER BE ABLE TO SEPARATE US FROM THE LOVE OF GOD THAT IS REVEALED IN CHRIST JESUS OUR LORD.  
ROMANS 8:39 (NLT)

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Are you facing something difficult in your life? Maybe you’re struggling in school or a family member is sick, and you feel like you’re getting whipped around in a strong wind. No matter how hard that wind blows, know that Jesus is holding on to you. If you know Him as your Savior, you are His child, and the love He has for you will never break. He’ll never let you go!

## THE CURE

READ: JOHN 3:16; ROMANS 6:23; JAMES 5:15

What are you two working on?" Mom asked as she set grocery bags on the counter.

"Our Sunday school teacher gave us homework," answered Maddie.

Abby, Maddie's best friend, looked up from her project. "But it's fun work," she added.

Mom looked at the kitchen table. Glue sticks, scissors, sheets of tissue paper, a stack of thick white card stock, and gel pens in a variety of colors covered the surface. "What's the assignment?"

Maddie put down the large egg shape she had cut out of card stock. "We're supposed to make invitations for the Easter service on Sunday. Mrs. Miller wants us to hand them out to our neighbors and friends who don't have a church."

Abby also cut out an egg shape. "We decided to make our invitations look like Easter eggs. We'll decorate the front, and on the back we'll write the time and place."

Mom watched as Maddie glued pink and purple tissue paper strips onto her egg, then added sequins down the center of each strip. Abby tore pieces of tissue and covered her paper egg with a mosaic of overlapping colors.

"What a great idea," said Mom. "These beautiful invitations can point people to the cure."

Maddie put her glue stick down. "What cure?"

"Do our neighbors have a disease? Is it Covid?" asked Abby.

Mom smiled. "We were all born with a disease. It's called sin, and it's deadly. Without the cure, this disease ends with death, so Jesus came to save us. He's the cure!"

"Is Jesus like that pink medicine I took for my earache?" asked Maddie.

"Sort of," said Mom. "Only much better."

Abby looked confused. "How do we take Jesus?"

"Remember when you and Maddie both trusted Jesus as your Savior at church camp last summer?" The girls nodded. "When you trusted in Him, He took away your sin," Mom told them. "He forgave you for the wrong things you've done and gave you eternal life. Now you never need to be afraid of death, because even though our bodies die, Jesus promises to raise you from the dead one day, just like He rose again on Easter Sunday."

Maddie picked up her scissors. "I guess we need to make a bunch of these invitations so everyone can know about the cure!" ♥ BONNIE CARR

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### JESUS IS THE CURE FOR SIN

**KEY VERSE:** AND SHE WILL BRING FORTH A SON, AND YOU SHALL CALL HIS NAME JESUS, FOR HE WILL SAVE HIS PEOPLE FROM THEIR SINS. MATTHEW 1:21

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Did you know that everyone is born with a disease called sin? You've probably heard a lot about disease and sickness these last few years, but sin is the most serious disease of all. It is deadly, and there is only one cure—Jesus. Those who trust in Him are cleansed of their sin and given eternal life. Trust Him to save you from sin. Then let others know about Jesus so they can be cured too.

# MAMÁ PLAYS FÚTBOL

READ: EPHESIANS 6:1-9; 1 JOHN 4:7-12

Miguel, do you want to play soccer?” Miguel looked up from his homework. His friend Isaac peeked at him through the screen door. Miguel grinned. “You mean *fútbol*?” he asked, using the Spanish word for soccer.

Isaac laughed. “No, soccer!”

“*Fútbol!*”

“Homework!” Mamá pushed through the swinging door from the kitchen. “It’s not long until dinner. We’re having *empanadas*.”

Miguel’s mouth watered as he thought of the fried pockets of pastry with cheesy filling. Then he looked down at his book. “I can finish my homework later, Mamá.”

Mamá shook her head. “Homework first. Then dinner. Then *fútbol*. That’s the rule.” She went back into the kitchen.

“It’s a dumb rule,” Miguel muttered. He pushed his book away and slipped outside.

Minutes later, Mamá came outside. “Uh oh,” Isaac said.

“I want to play too,” Mamá said. “I want to play *fútbol*.” Isaac and Miguel looked at each other. Suddenly, Mamá scooped up the soccer ball and started running away from the boys. She ran out of the front yard and down the street.

“Mamá, wait! Where are you going?” Miguel shouted. “Mamá!”

Mamá stopped running. “What’s wrong?” she asked. “I want to play *fútbol*.”

“You’re not playing by the rules!” Miguel said.

“Why should I?” Mamá asked.

Miguel tried to catch his breath. “Without rules, *fútbol* isn’t *fútbol*. You’re just running with the ball by yourself.”

Mamá nodded. “You’re right. Following the rules allows everyone to play the game together. The rules we have in our family are like that too. They help us think about how our actions affect others so we can show each other the love of Jesus instead of only thinking about ourselves.” Mamá bounced the soccer ball against her knee. “You know He died for us because we broke His rules, right? And we can show that same kind of love by acting in a way that benefits others and not just ourselves.” Mamá smiled and tossed the ball to Miguel.

“Okay, Mamá,” Miguel said. “I’ll go do my homework.”

“And I’ll finish dinner,” Mamá said. “Let’s not keep those *empanadas* waiting!” ♥

HANNAH ZELLERS

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## LOVE OTHERS THROUGH YOUR ACTIONS

**KEY VERSE:** DEAR FRIENDS, SINCE GOD SO LOVED US,  
WE ALSO OUGHT TO LOVE ONE ANOTHER. 1 JOHN 4:11 (NIV)

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Do you wish you didn’t have rules to follow? Remember those rules are there to help everyone get along and live in peace. Rules give us an opportunity to put others first and show them the love of Jesus, who gave His life for the good of everyone who trusts in Him. What rules can you follow today to show others you care about them?

# SINGING IN THE RAIN

READ: PSALMS 126:3; 147:1-9, 14-18

Oh no! It looks like rain!” Reid exclaimed, anxiously looking up at the sky from the porch of the vacation cottage his family was renting for spring break.

“It sure does,” Mom said. “I think we’d better postpone our picnic on the beach until later in the week.”

“But I want to go swimming!” Reid said. As he spoke, raindrops began to fall, and his eyebrows drew together in a frown. Soon rain was pouring down, and Reid groaned in frustration. “My whole day is ruined,” he grumbled.

Reid’s sister Braelin held a finger to her lips. “Shhh...listen.” A clear, pure song came from a treetop. A bird was singing in the rain.

“I don’t care about a dumb bird singing. The day is ruined!” Reid shot back. “What good is a vacation if you can’t do anything?”

“Why don’t you get out one of your games, Reid? We may as well have some fun in spite of the rain,” said Dad.

“Fun? Yeah right!” Reid fumed, but he grudgingly went to get a game. Soon he, Braelin, Dad, and Mom were busy playing and laughing.

Suddenly Dad looked up at the clock. “Can you believe it’s nearly dinnertime? Why don’t we roast hot dogs in the fireplace?”

“We can have a picnic dinner right here,” said Mom. “Let’s get the fire going and spread a blanket on the floor.”

As they ate, Braelin grinned. “This is fun, isn’t it, Reid?”

“It’s great!” Reid pushed a gooey toasted marshmallow off his stick onto a graham cracker. “The whole day was so much fun that I forgot about the rain. I’ve been thinking—that bird had the right idea after all. Sorry I got so upset earlier.”

“It’s okay,” said Dad. “It’s natural to feel disappointed when plans don’t work out. But the rain didn’t stop us from enjoying our time together.”

“That’s right,” said Mom. “We got to spend this rainy day together, and that brought us joy. That’s a good thing to remember whenever we feel sad or disappointed in life. Even when things are hard, Jesus is with us, and we can always find joy in His presence. That bird was a good example for all of us. There’s always a reason to sing—even when it rains.” ♥ CAROLYN E. YOST

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## FIND REASONS TO SING

**KEY VERSE:** REJOICE IN THE LORD ALWAYS. AGAIN I WILL SAY, REJOICE!  
PHILIPPIANS 4:4

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Do you sing in the rain? How about when it rains in your life—when things don’t go your way? We all have times of disappointment and sadness, but we don’t have to go through them alone. Jesus loves you so much He died for you, and He promises to always be with you. When you find joy in His presence and remember all the blessings He has put in your life, you’ll always find reasons to sing.

## SACRIFICE OF LOVE

READ: JOHN 10:11-18; ROMANS 6:23; 10:13

**C**ome on, Winston,” Ellis called to his dog. “Let’s go explore along the creek. We can cross the pasture today because the cows are way off on the other side.” Winston came running, and they started out.

When Ellis stopped to examine some tracks, he heard an angry bellow. His feet froze as a black Angus bull crashed through the brush and charged toward him. Winston lunged at the animal, snarling furiously. The bull shook his head and turned his attention to Winston. As Ellis pulled himself into a tree, the bull rammed the dog against the ground.

When Ellis looked back down, he saw the angry bull charge Winston again, then return to the brush. He climbed down from the tree and hurried to Winston’s still form. A lump rose in his throat, and he sprinted toward the house. “Dad! Mom!” he called frantically. “Help me!” His parents came running, and tears streamed down Ellis’s cheeks as he told them about the bull.

Dad followed Ellis to where Winston was and put his ear to the dog’s chest. “His heart is still beating. Let’s get him to the vet.”

The vet found that Winston had a broken rib and a concussion, but he’d be okay. “We’ll keep him here overnight, then you can come get him in the morning.”

As Ellis and Dad rode home, Ellis spoke quietly. “Winston went after that bull so it wouldn’t hurt me.”

Dad nodded. “Winston was willing to face injury and even death so you could live.” After a moment, he added, “That’s what Jesus did for us too. He willingly suffered pain and died on a cross to save us from eternal death. He offers us the gift of eternal life.”

“He loves us a lot to be willing to do that, doesn’t He?” asked Ellis.

“He sure does,” said Dad. “He knew that sacrificing His life was the only way to save us. Because of our sin, there was nothing we could do to save ourselves.”

Ellis sighed as he looked out the window. “I’m so glad Winston is going to be okay after fighting that bull to save me,” he said. “And I’m so glad Jesus loved me enough to die for me.”

Dad smiled at him. “Me too.” ♥ KAREN L. BLUMHAGEN

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### JESUS GAVE HIS LIFE FOR YOU

**KEY VERSE:** THIS IS HOW WE KNOW WHAT REAL LOVE IS:  
JESUS GAVE HIS LIFE FOR US. 1 JOHN 3:16 (ERV)

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Did you know that Jesus loves you so much He willingly gave His life for you? Like everyone, you have sinned by doing things that are wrong, and God requires that sin must be punished. But Jesus took the punishment you deserve. He faced death on a cross so you could have life. Accept His gift of eternal life today!

**TODAY IS GOOD FRIDAY.**

THANK JESUS FOR THE SACRIFICE HE MADE FOR YOU.