

When we see in Scripture the dying love of our Savior on the cross, pouring out His life for hell-worthy sinners, we should exclaim with the apostle John, “What manner of love is this!” The twenty-four hours between the Passover meal in the upper room and the death of Christ on the cross of Calvary are indeed the most significant twenty-four hours in history. Brother Chris Anderson—a gifted hymnwriter as well as a devotional writer—helps us slow down during these twenty-four hours, as do the four evangelists, to consider the upper room discourse, the high-priestly prayer of Christ, and the substitutionary atonement of our Lord on the cross in His journey from Gethsemane to Gabbatha to Golgotha. By pointing us back to the love of the Triune God, revealing the humanity and divinity of the Lord Jesus, and calling sinners to embrace Christ as freely offered in the gospel, these thirty-one meditations reveal the One Who alone can give us everlasting life through the gospel. Find here medicine for the weary soul!

Joel Beeke, Chancellor and Professor of Systematic Theology and Homiletics, Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary, and Pastor of Heritage Reformed Congregation, Grand Rapids, Michigan

I have read *Sundown to Sundown* with profit to my soul. The last day of Jesus’ earthly life makes a sobering journey. Chris Anderson has obviously traveled the road many times as a careful observer of the sufferings of our Lord. In this book he guides us to confront the most sobering moments in sacred history. I recommend the book as a series of devotional readings with a chapter for each day before Good Friday.

Kevin Bauder, Research Professor of Systematic Theology, Central Baptist Theological Seminary, and Pastor of Bible Baptist Church, East Bethel, Minnesota

We live in a culture that moves at an unrelenting pace, often conditioning us to do the same—leaving little time to practice the lost art of meditation. But Christian meditation is distinct from the emptying practices of other world religions. Instead of clearing the mind of everything, biblical meditation calls us to fill our hearts and minds with the truths, promises, and beauty of God as revealed in His Word. In this insightful book, Chris Anderson provides a focused guide to help us meditate on Christ's work in His final hours before and on the cross. As you walk through these reflections, your heart will be drawn to the depth of His suffering and the greatness of His love. This is a book you'll want to add to your library.

Josh Buice, Pastor of Pray's Mill Baptist Church, Douglasville, Georgia, Founder and President of G3 Ministries, and Assistant Professor of Preaching at Grace Bible Theological Seminary, Conway, Arkansas

Chris Anderson helps us reflect on the final hours of Jesus' life—the redemptive work that changed everything for us. This devotional is an invitation to find hope in the midst of sorrow. Each day's reading is paired with a beautiful hymn, echoing the themes of the Scripture and inviting us into a deeper, more personal worship experience. These reflections will nourish your soul and guide you closer to the heart of Christ. As you meditate each day on His last hours, your appreciation for Christ's cross will deepen. *Sundown to Sundown* will leave you moved by the grace of the One Who gave His all for you.

Josh Crockett, President of Bob Jones University



*Chris
Anderson*

SUNDOWN
to
SUNDOWN

*Meditations on
the Twenty-Four Hours
Preceding Jesus'
Death*

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Sundown to Sundown: Meditations on the Twenty-Four Hours Preceding Jesus' Death

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To the Lord Jesus Christ,
“Who loved me and gave Himself for me”
(Galatians 2:20)

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FOREWORD

Chris Anderson loves to preach, and he never preaches with more passion than when he preaches on the cross. As Chris' full-time associate from 2005–2012, I had an up-close view of the way his preaching on Christ's passion transformed him and our congregation. In April–June 2007 he fed two precious chapters, Matthew 26–27, to Tri-County Bible Church, Madison, Ohio. As that series wrapped up, I encouraged Chris to develop his study in writing. On Good Friday, April 2, 2010, we delivered a small devotional titled *Sundown to Sundown* to attendees at our annual Passion Service, which included several other churches in Northeast Ohio.

Since that time, I've encouraged Chris to expand that little booklet into a fuller devotional we could publish together through Church Works Media. Thankfully, he has now done so, adding extensive work on John 13–17.

His ten weeks in Matthew 26–27 kept his attention on the substitutionary death of Jesus, and his attention has never left that topic. He has become deeply convinced that the center of the gospel must be the center of the Christian life, the center of the church's life and testimony, and the center of preaching. And Chris lives this conviction. He personally delights in the gospel, feeds his soul on the gospel, fights his sin with the gospel, ministers the gospel to his family, muses on the gospel day and night, and talks about it in almost every conversation.

In our early years together, these gospel musings resulted in several hymn texts which have well served many churches' corporate worship of the Lord Jesus. Chris has continued writing hymn lyrics on Christ's finished work. So, just as I included a portion from one of his hymns in each devotional in the first *Sundown to Sundown* booklet in 2010, we've done so in this copy as well.

I am delighted to recommend—and, as the lead designer, to present—this devotional booklet to you. I pray that it will be used by the Lord to inflame your love for Christ Jesus, Who “made himself

nothing” and “humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross” (Philippians 2:7–8).

Joe Tyrpak
Madison, Ohio

2025

INTRODUCTION

The most remarkable twenty-four hours in history began with a feast which marked the passing of the Old Covenant and the dawning of the New—just after sunset.

That day like no other—*sundown to sundown*—included Jesus' time with the disciples in the upper room, Jesus' high-priestly prayer, Jesus' agony in Gethsemane, Jesus' betrayal by Judas, Jesus' abandonment by the disciples, Jesus' arrest and trials through the night, and ultimately, Jesus' crucifixion and cries from the cross.

Whereas the four Gospels spend sixty-six chapters on the first three years of Jesus' ministry, they decelerate significantly during its final week. Nearly a third of the chapters in the Gospels focus on the last week before Jesus' death. And the biblical record slows to a snail's pace during these final twenty-four hours, zooming in and allowing us to marvel at the mystery of Jesus' suffering.

This means that *thirteen chapters*—almost fifteen percent of the Gospels—are taken up with this *single day*. John Stott points out, “John’s Gospel has justly been described as having two parts, ‘the book of the signs’ and ‘the book of the Passion,’ since John spends an almost equal amount of time on each.” He further notes that even the resurrected Christ focused His teaching primarily on the significance of His death—“not the living but the giving of his life.”¹

Jesus' public ministry crescendoed in a remarkable way during His final week. He had entered Jerusalem in triumph, presenting Himself as the Messiah to the multitudes crammed into the Holy City for the Passover (Matthew 21:1–11). He had wept over the city, His chest heaving as He mourned over the Jews' rejection of Him and their approaching judgement (Luke 19:41–44). He had embarrassed several waves of insincere questioners with His infinite wisdom (Matthew 22:15–46). His final teaching sessions, focused on His future return and reign, were thunderous (Matthew 24–25).

1 John Stott, *The Cross of Christ* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2006), 37–38.

Then came the final twenty-four hours. And everything. Slowed. Down.

It isn't just the Gospels that focus our attention on Jesus' final hours. The entire New Testament is a commentary on the cross. William Evans writes, "The New Testament is the Book of the Cross. Cut the New Testament anywhere, and it bleeds. Through every page runs the scarlet cord of redemption."²

The Old Testament is surprisingly cross-centered as well. W. A. Criswell explains:

At least seventy-five percent of the prophecies concerning Christ in the Old Testament were fulfilled *during this week!* ... It seemed that every step in His judgment and crucifixion was described accurately in the Old Testament and fulfilled exactly as it was described.³

Do you see? Do you understand the significance of this single day?

With unmistakable wonder, the four Gospels tether our attention to Jesus' last day. Those precious hours were spent first with His friends and then with His foes—teaching, then suffering.

Jesus' last twenty-four hours began with unrivaled teaching.

Jesus began His final fleeting hours with the twelve—then the eleven—not the multitudes. Those few hours are remarkable for their tenderness. As His own suffering approached, He spoke to His disciples intimately and encouragingly, preparing them for all that lay ahead. Although I've often described the Sermon on the Mount as the greatest sermon ever preached, the upper-room discourse may change my mind. Jesus' teaching and prayer in John 13–17 changed the world.

Jesus' last twenty-four hours ended with unrivaled suffering.

In Gethsemane, following a season of agonizing prayer with the Father, Jesus was turned over to His foes. For the rest of the night,

2 William Evans, *Epochs in the Life of Christ* (New York, NY: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1916), 126.

3 W. A. Criswell, *Preaching on the Life of Christ: Sermons on the Epochs in the Life of Christ* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1958), 78, 83.

they berated and bullied Him through multiple trials and tortures. As morning dawned, they culminated their butchery with a barbaric crucifixion. Jesus' suffering wouldn't end until His lifeless body was taken down from the cross and laid in a borrowed tomb.

The Bible passages which draw our attention to the Lord Jesus are holy ground. The upper room is the ultimate encapsulation of divine wisdom. And the cross is the ultimate expression of divine love. Jerry Bridges writes,

There is no doubt that the most convincing evidence of God's love in all of Scripture is His giving His Son to die for our sins.... If we want proof of God's love for us, then we must look first at the Cross where God offered up His Son as a sacrifice for our sins. Calvary is the one objective, absolute, irrefutable proof of God's love for us.⁴

If you pay attention, Jesus' last twenty-four hours will change you. I've experienced it. This book took shape during a particularly challenging time in my life. Looking to Jesus' words and wounds, day after difficult day, nourished my soul. I pray that the same will be true for you, and that you will never be the same. Grace.

Chris Anderson
Grayson, Georgia
2025

*We were scattered, lost and battered—
Head-strong sheep gone astray.
Ever roaming, ever groaning,
Hell-bent on our own way.
Jesus, Shepherd, loving Shepherd,
Sent from heaven to earth—
You have sought us, found and brought us
Safely into Your church.*

4 Jerry Bridges, *Trusting God* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2008), 146.

*We were filthy, gravely guilty;
 Justice called for our blood.
 Death was looming; hell was fuming—
 Who could save us from God?
 Jesus, Shepherd, bleeding Shepherd,
 By Your wounds we are purged.
 Lamb, unblemished, You have finished
 All for love for Your church!*

*You have made us and have saved us
 At an infinite price.
 Now we're praying that the straying
 Will, like us, turn to Christ.
 Jesus, Shepherd, saving Shepherd,
 We have joined in Your search.
 As You found us, now astound us
 By expanding Your church!⁵*



5 Chris Anderson and Matt Taylor, "Jesus, Shepherd" (The Wilds, 2023).

JESUS' MERCY: "TODAY YOU WILL BE WITH ME IN PARADISE"

Luke 23:32–43

Jesus slouched on the cross. A living, breathing scab. His face marred so that He barely resembled a man. His every sluggish breath an agony.

He hung between two thieves, their very company adding to His shame and yet fulfilling biblical prophecy. As Isaiah 53:12 predicted, "He was numbered with the transgressors" (Luke 22:37). He was counted as a common criminal—not only by His murderers, but—astoundingly—by God Himself.

Jesus hung between the two thieves the way He has always stood among men and women—an eternal Dividing Line. Jesus is the great Continental Divide—the One parting people for eternity, the difference between heaven and hell.

Initially, both criminals cried out in disdain, finding some perverse relief for their own pain in hurling barbs at Jesus. Matthew tells us, "And the robbers who were crucified with him also reviled him" (Matthew 27:44).

But over time, one of them paused. Tradition has assigned him the name Dismas. Dismas' life had been squandered. He likely had broken his mother's heart and brought shame on his father. His futile life was reaching a brutal end. And yet, he used his terrible perch on the cross to watch the Lord Jesus, to listen, to reflect. He had heard but one statement from Jesus: "Father, forgive them." And in time—*just* in time—he was won over.

The other thief continued to rail on Jesus: “Are you not the Christ? Save yourself and us!” (Luke 23:39). Though his words might sound like the seed of faith, they were mere mockery, an echo of the jeers he had heard from the mob. Ironically, had Jesus acted on the man’s words and saved Himself, He could *not* have saved anyone else.

Dismas had heard enough. He had listened as hundreds of people mocked Jesus from the foot of the cross. Once he ceased from his own abuse of Jesus, he likely listened in silence, not daring to offer a reproof. He had no right. The people were better than him. But *this* man, his fellow criminal, was a peer. Dismas felt some strange sense of duty. He rebuked the other thief, acknowledging their common guilt and contrasting it with Jesus’ innocence: “Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? And we indeed justly, for we are receiving the due reward of our deeds; but this man has done nothing wrong” (Luke 23:40-41).

And then He spoke to Jesus, offering the simplest of prayers. “Remember me when you come into your kingdom” (Luke 23:42).

Just one sentence, but it contained eternity.

He acknowledged that Jesus is a King. He confessed that Jesus’ kingdom is not of this world. He didn’t directly ask Jesus for entrance into that kingdom. He deserved no heaven, no mercy, no hope. He simply asked for a remembrance, for a kind thought from Jesus when He Himself entered in. That would be enough.

And it *was* enough. Jesus assured Dismas that that very day—in moments, really—he would be with Him in paradise (Luke 23:42).

Not just in paradise. *With Him*. That was the real grace of it all. Jesus had been the Friend of sinners in life. He was the Friend of sinners in death.

Students of Scripture have long noted Dismas as a trophy of grace. He had no opportunity to do good deeds, no chance at ref-

ormation, no time even for baptism. He was a notorious sinner. Hopeless. Damned. Lost.

But he believed in Jesus, and it changed his eternity. When he breathed his last, he awakened in paradise. Not the grave. Certainly not purgatory. *Paradise*. Spurgeon writes, wistfully, that the thief was Jesus' "last companion on earth" but His "first companion in paradise."⁹²

The thief's faith is remarkable when you reflect on it. To see in Jesus—despite His blood-crusted face and His naked, tortured body—the true and divine King? To believe, despite the jeering and mocking of the crowd? To see past his own distracting agonies? To repent of a lifetime of evil in a mere moment of grace? It is a marvel. God did that.

Indeed, it's a miracle that *any* of us believe and are saved. Alexander Whyte, the preacher of countless biblical biographies, writes of the hope we sinners should draw from Dismas' story:

The swiftness of the thief's repentance, and faith, and confession, and pardon, and sanctification, and glorification, is something very blessed for us all to think about, and never to forget; and, especially, those of us who must make haste and lose no more time if we are to be for ever with him and with his Lord in paradise.⁹³

The other thief, it seems, died in his defiance, taking his mockery of Jesus to his grave, and to his horrors beyond the grave.

Ken Gire writes, "On either side [hung] two thieves, teetering between life and death, between heaven and hell. Teetering until one, at last, [reached] out in faith."⁹⁴

92 Spurgeon, *12 Sermons*, 28–32. The sermon is titled "The Believing Thief" and was preached on April 7, 1889.

93 Alexander Whyte, *Bible Characters from the Old and New Testaments* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1990), 532–33.

94 Gire, 107.

Every person teeters in the same way. Jesus, ever in the middle, is the great Dividing Line.

Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God. (John 3:18)

Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him. (John 3:36)

Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life. (1 John 5:12)

On which side of Jesus are you?

*Looking up, I can see Your sympathy;
I doubt myself, but I'm sure of Your love.
Lavish grace was poured out at Calvary,
Securing me for our home above.*

*You are always good, You are only good;
You are always good to me.
Though my eyes can't see, help my heart believe
You are always, only good.⁹⁵*



*Christ will summon His disciples
From His throne beyond the skies:
"You have followed Me through trials;
Follow Me to paradise."*

95 Chris Anderson and Jonathan Hamilton, "You Are Always Good" (Majesty Music, 2014).

*"We will follow!" Rise up and say,
"We will follow our Lord!
To the end of the world and age,
We will follow Christ our Lord!"*⁹⁶



96 Chris Anderson and Greg Habegger, "We Will Follow" (Church Works Media, 2017).



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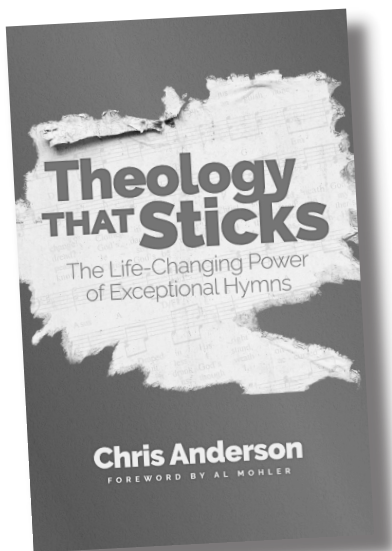


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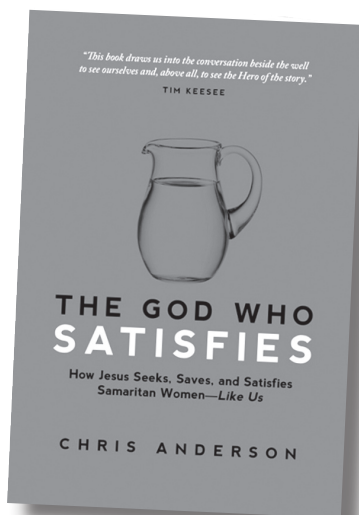
"A thoughtful book bristling with biblical guidance, designed to help Christians worship God with theological depth and power."

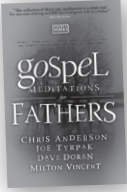
—**Milton Vincent**, pastor, author of *A Gospel Primer for Christians: Learning to See the Glories of God's Love*

God is creating worshipers out of Samaritan women (like us) through the life-changing power of the gospel! John chapter 4 is a microcosm of what God is doing in the world, pointing us to answers for so many problems of our own day, such as racial prejudice, religious confusion, materialism, divorce, and sensuality. Join Chris Anderson on this study through his favorite narrative from Scripture, and find out how Jesus seeks, saves, and satisfies sinners.

"This book draws us into the conversation beside the well to see ourselves and, above all, to see the Hero of the story."

—**Tim Keese**, author of *Dispatches from the Front: Stories of Gospel Advance in the World's Difficult Places*

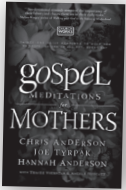




Gospel Meditations for Fathers

“This collection of thirty-one meditations is a must-read for any man striving to fulfill his God-given role as a father. Since each reading is both biblical and practical, it equips the reader to lead family members to greater love to Christ and to God’s Word. As parents to four and grandparents to fifteen, Patricia and I recommend this as a fresh resource.”

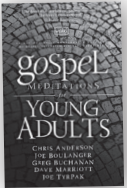
—*John MacArthur*



Gospel Meditations for Mothers

“In the midst of busy days and sleepless nights, moms need the encouragement that only the gospel can give. *Gospel Meditations for Mothers* offers powerful biblical truth and guidance that reminds moms of the importance of their labors and cheers them on in their daily tasks. Whether you’re parenting a toddler or a teen, these gospel-focused reflections will minister to your heart as you care for your children.”

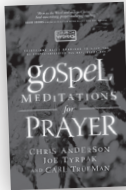
—*Melissa Kruger*



Gospel Meditations for Young Adults

“*Gospel Meditations for Young Adults* is a breath of fresh air for young Christians and for all of us who are raising, discipling, mentoring, or just concerned about them and their spiritual growth and wellbeing. The devotionals are biblical, pastoral, succinct, readable, relevant, and relatable. More importantly, the focus is cross-centered and theological without being forced or trite. This would be a great tool to use in parenting, personal discipleship, group study, or even pastoral counseling.”

—*Voddie Baucham*



Gospel Meditations for Prayer

“Brief and biblical, these meditations are full of sharp edges. They lead us to pray as cross-bearing disciples of Christ. Yet Anderson, Typpak, and Trueman comfort us with Christ’s perfect grace for fallen people. So *Gospel Meditations for Prayer* is an encouraging book, but one designed to stretch you.”

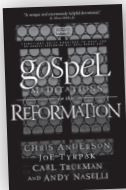
—*Joel Beeke*



Gospel Meditations for Christmas

“Too often Christmas speeds past us in a blur of busyness and stress, with only the briefest time and the shallowest thoughts given to the Christ that’s meant to be at the heart of it all. Give yourself a Christmas to remember by using this profound devotional to pause, ponder, and praise our wonderful Savior.”

—*David Murray*



Gospel Meditations on the Reformation

“Theologically rich, thoughtful, and historically rooted devotionals are a rare treat. This volume, which unfolds the theological commitments and pastoral heart of the Reformers, is a unique and enormously helpful devotional.”

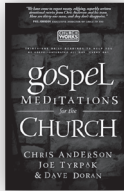
—*R. Albert Mohler, Jr.*



Gospel Meditations for Women

“Wrestling with guilt and frustration, far too many Christian women are living below the privileges of their spiritual inheritance. The solution is not found in any strengthened resolve of duty, but rather in having souls settled in the blessed liberty of Christ through the sweet enjoyment of the gospel. A union of sound doctrine and practical teaching, *Gospel Meditations for Women* beautifully highlights those unbinding messages of grace that so powerfully ignite joyful passion for Christ and holy living. What an invaluable resource!”

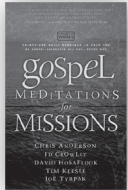
—*Holly Stratton*



Gospel Meditations for the Church

“We have come to expect meaty, edifying, superbly written devotional entries from Chris Anderson and his team. Here are thirty-one more, and they don't disappoint.”

—*Phil Johnson*



Gospel Meditations for Missions

“Can we do missions without meditating on the gospel? Of course not. Yet, how many well-meaning, mission-minded saints go off into the harvest having failed to prepare their own hearts with due consideration of the good news? Too many I fear. *Gospel Meditations for Missions* helps us slow down to consider what is of first importance that we might hold this treasure more fully in our clay hearts.”

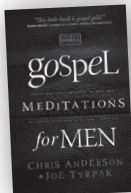
—*Thabiti Anyabwire*



Gospel Meditations for the Hurting

“These meditations are Word-centered prescriptions that blow away the meaningless Christian platitudes often used to mask unanswerable pain. Until that day when Christ Himself wipes away all tears from our eyes, the Scriptures provide strength, help, and hope in this broken world. Let this book guide you to Christ, the only sure and lasting refuge.”

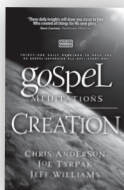
—*Tim Keece*



Gospel Meditations for Men

“Chris and Joe have co-authored a delightful and helpful little book of daily meditations. This is not one of those trendy Reformed ‘the Bible says all men have to act like John Wayne or cavemen with better table manners’ kind of productions. Many of the devotions are simply gospel expositions, and those which have a male-specific orientation are on topics like lust, where male psychology is important.”

—*Carl Trueman*



Gospel Meditations on Creation

“Jeff Williams is a uniquely gifted human being whom God has put in extraordinary places. What is equally remarkable is how the wonder he finds in our Creator spills into all the ordinariness of the common day. I'd like to be more like that. In this devotional he and his fellow writers encourage us to just be amazed at the beauty and greatness of our Maker and Savior.”

—*Keith Getty*