

A person is seen from behind, standing with their arms raised high in a gesture of praise or worship. They are wearing a dark long-sleeved shirt. The background is a dramatic sky at sunset or sunrise, with golden light breaking through dark, layered clouds. The overall mood is one of hope, faith, and spiritual connection.

Belonging to Him

**OUR NEED FOR
LOVING RELATIONSHIP**

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Belonging to Him

The Warm Embrace of Grace

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“Kangaroo” Care

The Warm Embrace of Grace



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The Warm Embrace of Grace

The Embrace of Forgiveness

Except for the first two chapters, most of the Bible isn't about the embrace of happily ever after. It's about the embrace of restoration—or forgiveness.

“Esau ran to meet [Jacob] and embraced him, and fell on his neck and kissed him, and they wept.”
(Genesis 33:4)

“[Joseph] kissed all his brothers and wept on them, and afterward his brothers talked with him.”
(Genesis 45:15)

The Warm Embrace of Grace

The Embrace of Forgiveness

Except for the first two chapters, most of the Bible isn't about the embrace of happily ever after. It's about the embrace of restoration—or forgiveness.

*“‘Comfort, O comfort my people,’ says your God.
‘Speak kindly to Jerusalem and call out to her, that her warfare has ended, that her iniquity has been removed, that she has received of the LORD’S hand double for all her sins.’” (Isaiah 40:1-2)*

The Warm Embrace of Grace

The Embrace of Forgiveness



The Warm Embrace of Grace

The Embrace of Forgiveness

“Now when he had spent everything, a severe famine occurred in that country, and he began to be impoverished.

*But when he came to his senses, he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired men have more than enough bread, but I am dying here with hunger.’”
(Luke 15:14-15, 17-18)*

The Warm Embrace of Grace

The Embrace of Forgiveness

“So he got up and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion for him, and ran and embraced him and kissed him.

And the son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’” (Luke 15:20-21)

The Warm Embrace of Grace

The Embrace of Forgiveness

“But the father said to his slaves, ‘Quickly bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet; and bring the fattened calf, kill it, and let us eat and celebrate.

For this son of mine was dead and has come to life again. He was lost and has been found.’”

(Luke 15:22-24)

The Warm Embrace of Grace

The Embrace of Forgiveness



The Warm Embrace of Grace

God Wants to Love Us Back to Life



The Warm Embrace of Grace

God Wants to Love Us Back to Life

“Because of his great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, [God] made us alive together with Christ...so that in the ages to come he might show the surpassing riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.” (Ephesians 2:4-5, 7)

The Warm Embrace of Grace

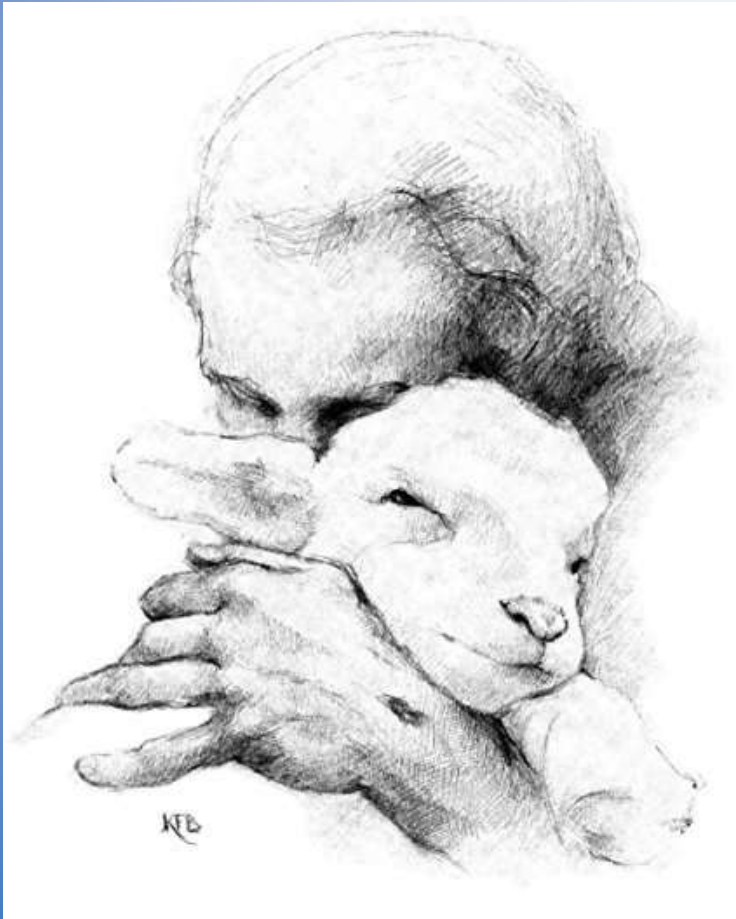
God Wants to Love Us Back to Life

*“How great a love the Father has bestowed on us,
that we would be called children of God.”*

(1 John 3:1)

The Warm Embrace of Grace

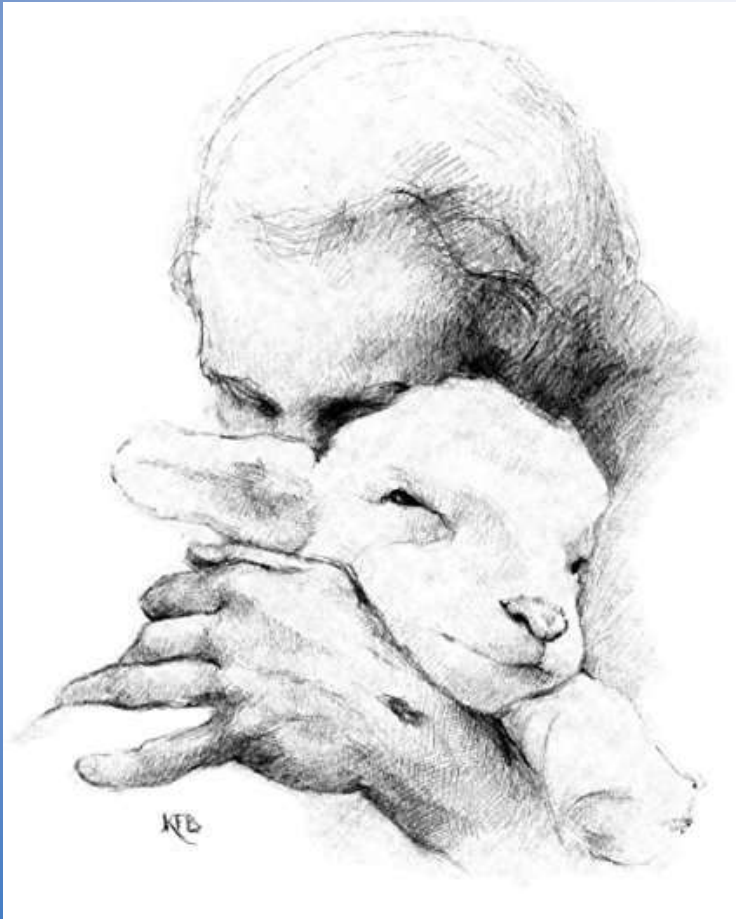
Christ's Embrace



“The Lord is my shepherd. I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside quiet waters. He restores my soul.” (Psalm 23:2-3)

The Warm Embrace of Grace

Christ's Embrace



*“Come to me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.”
(Matthew 11:28-30)*

The Warm Embrace of Grace

The Beatitudes of Belonging

“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

Blessed are the gentle, for they shall inherit the earth.” (Matthew 5:3-5)

The Warm Embrace of Grace

The Beatitudes of Belonging

“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.” (Matthew 5:6-8)

The Warm Embrace of Grace

The Beatitudes of Belonging

“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.

Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” (Matthew 5:9-10)

The Warm Embrace of Grace

The Beatitudes of Belonging

Within Christ's loving embrace, we also receive:

- **Connection**
- **Acceptance**
- **Affirmation**
- **Simplicity**
- **Peace**
- **Rest**
- **Joy**

The Warm Embrace of Grace



Returning The Embrace

The Warm Embrace of Grace

Returning The Embrace

“Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you. (Ephesians 4:31-32)

The Warm Embrace of Grace

Returning The Embrace



*“We proved to be gentle among you, as a nursing mother tenderly cares for her own children.”
(1 Thess. 2:7-8)*

The Warm Embrace of Grace

Returning The Embrace



“Having so fond an affection for you, we were well-pleased to impart to you not only the gospel of God but also our own lives, because you had become very dear to us.” (1 Thess. 2:7-8)

The Warm Embrace of Grace

The Endless Boundaries of Christ's Love

“I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power . . . to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ . . . that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.” (Ephesians 3:17-19)

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