

A landscape photograph of a field at sunset. The sky is a gradient of orange, red, and purple. A large tree silhouette is on the left. A white text box is in the center.

**CO
ME
CLO
SER**

Day 1 // COME CLOSER

A lot of discussion is going on around us about being able to spend time with our families over the Christmas period – we all want to “come close!” I’m sure, like me, you are praying this is possible. What I do know though is that each day our Heavenly Father says to us: **“Come closer”**. Every day throughout the pandemic He has made this invitation to you and whatever happens over Christmas He will continue to say it to you.

“We come closer to God and approach Him with an open heart, fully convinced that nothing will keep us at a distance from Him.”

Hebrews 10:23 (TPT)

I love the promise that the writer of Hebrews shares with us today that *“nothing will keep us at a distance from Him.”* Our Heavenly Father is always ready to receive us. Let me encourage you today to come to His table. You may never have experienced the loving embrace or welcome of an earthly father or, because of the pandemic, it may be a long time since you were able to embrace your earthly father but today come into the presence of your Heavenly Father, open your heart to Him and receive His love. Today He says: **“Come closer!”**

Day 2 // COME AND GAZE

“Come and gaze upon my pierced hands and feet. See for yourselves, it is I standing here alive. Touch me and know that my wounds are real.”

Luke 24:39 (TPT)

We have watched on our news over the past few months the beautiful stories of people who have been brought back together after spending many days separated from their loved ones in hospital with Covid – we even got to witness this in our own church family. For many, Covid has taken a huge toll on their physical appearance but it hasn’t stopped their loved ones gazing into their face with love as they welcome them home.

Today Jesus, our Saviour calls us to “come and gaze” on His wounds and simply remember all He has done for us. We are so blessed today that His sacrifice means forgiveness for our sins, a life of abundance and eternal life forever more. What a blessed people we are! His wounds are real, and He chose to do it all for us! Stand in awe of His kindness today!

Day 3 // COME AND BE REFRESHED

For many these past nine months have been exhausting especially for our church family who have been on the frontline in the NHS – it really has been relentless and for many continues to be. If you are one of these special people, we thank you today. But let me remind you, that in the midst of your weariness and exhaustion today, your Saviour, Jesus, calls you to “come and be refreshed.” Imagine today being in the middle of a desert (this is how you may feel) and you are gasping then as Jesus said – He is your oasis!

“Are you weary, carrying a heavy burden? Then come to me. I will refresh your life, for I am your oasis. Simply join your life with mine. Learn my ways and you’ll discover that I’m gentle, humble, easy to please. You will find refreshment and rest in me. For all that I require of you will be pleasant and easy to bear.”

Matthew 11:28-29 (TPT)

Day 4 // COME AND REST

We sometimes forget that Jesus became human and understands the feelings that we have at the most challenging times of our lives. He suffered loss – his cousin, John the Baptist had just been beheaded, His disciples had been telling him all about their ministry trips and Mark 6 says that *“There was such a swirl of activity around Jesus... that they were unable to even eat a meal!”* Ever felt like this? I’m sure there have been times for many of us whether it’s due to a sudden loss, an incredibly intense time of work or just the demands of all those that look to us for help when we have felt exhausted with the pressure. If that’s you today, Jesus says what He said to His disciples that day:

“Come, let’s take a break and find a secluded place where you can rest a while.” Mark 6:31 (TPT)

Today, whatever your situation is, take some time – perhaps go for a walk in a park – and talk with Jesus, the only person who fully understands you and knows exactly what you are going through.

Day 5 // COME AND EAT

Oh - I like this heading! I'm always ready for a great meal! When we came out of lockdown earlier this year and could enjoy the "eat out to help out" project I was one of the first to get out there! I love cooking but I also love to be cooked for and to get it for half price was a bonus! But today Jesus invites us to eat and drink – not physically but spiritually. It is so easy in our crazy world to allow ourselves to starve spiritually especially if we relied on coming to the church building and meeting with other Christians to feed our spiritual health. But today, your Saviour who knows just what you need says:

"I am the Bread of Life. Come every day to me and you will never be hungry. Believe in me and you will never be thirsty."

John 6:35 (TPT)

Let me encourage you today to enjoy a feast by spending time filling yourself with the Bread of Life, whether that is spending time with your Bible or even listening to some great preaching. I trust that this week you have responded to Jesus' invitation to **"Come Closer"** and will feel refreshed body, soul and spirit.

As I was finishing these devotionals, I read this in Psalm 131:2 (TPT) *"I am humbled and quieted in your presence. Like a contented child who rests on its mother's lap, I'm your resting child and my soul is content in you."* Be quiet in our Lord's presence today and rest content as you **"Come closer!"**