



Full product can be ordered by calling
1-800-333-8300 or by visiting
www.FaithAliveResources.org

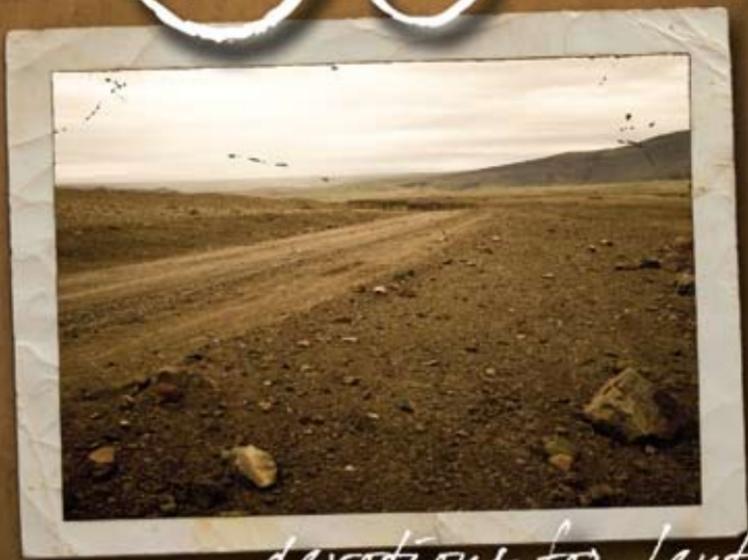
show me 

sample

Faith Alive Christian Resources

Property of Faith Alive Christian Resources. All rights reserved.

Through Tears to
Joy



devotions for Lent

STANLEY MAST

Through Tears to
Joy
devotions for Lent

STANLEY MAST



Grand Rapids, Michigan

These devotions were originally published in 1998 by Faith Alive Christian Resources as part of the HomeLink series.

Unless otherwise noted, the Scripture quotations in this publication are from the Holy Bible, New International Version, © 1973, 1978, 1984, International Bible Society. Used by permission of Zondervan Bible Publishers.

Through Tears to Joy: Devotions for Lent, © 2010 by Faith Alive Christian Resources, 2850 Kalamazoo Ave. SE, Grand Rapids, Mich. 49560.

All rights reserved. With the exception of brief excerpts for review purposes, no part of this book may be reproduced in any manner whatsoever without written permission from the publisher. Printed in the United States of America.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
Mast, Stanley.

Through tears to joy: devotions for Lent/Stanley Mast.

p. cm.

ISBN 978-1-59255-523-9

1. Lent—Meditations. I. Title.

BV85.M368 2010

242'.34—dc22

2009053548

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

God Cares

Because [Jesus] suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.

Read Hebrews 2:10-18

Suffering is really hard for us to understand. It's hard on our faith too, because the Bible clearly tells us that God is all-powerful and all-loving. That means we cannot explain away our suffering by saying that God can't do anything about it. The Bible teaches us that God can. So why are there times when God doesn't? Doesn't God care? We can easily begin to wonder if God really *is* an all-loving God. Why would a loving God leave us in pain? That doesn't seem to make sense.

But the Bible keeps right on telling us that God is both all-powerful and all-loving. So we stumble over tragedy in our lives, and we trip over the terrible disasters that strike people in the world around us. We could easily end up saying to ourselves, "I can't believe in a God who doesn't seem to care about the misery down here, a God who could do something about this pain but chooses not to."

Believers have responded to this problem of suffering in different ways. But whatever else they've said about suffering, they always insist that God *does* care about the misery here. When we shed tears of sorrow because someone we love has died, those tears matter to God. When we're frustrated because we can't get good grades even though we've studied so hard, God *does* care. And when we cry buckets

because we can't stand the pain anymore, we have God's full attention, because he hurts along with us.

How do we know this? I like the way Philip Yancey answers this question in his book *The Jesus I Never Knew*. Yancey compares us to characters in a play. We act out our lives of small triumph and great tragedy onstage, now and then calling out to an unseen Stage Manager, "You don't know what it's like out here!" Every so often in the Bible we hear a booming voice from far offstage, behind the curtain, "Yeah, and you don't know what it's like back here either!"

In this season of Lent, we focus on an astonishing fact. Once upon a time the Voice from offstage came onstage. By becoming a baby, then a child, then a teenager, and finally an adult, God experienced what life is like here on planet Earth. He was "made like his brothers in every way." Jesus found out what it's like to suffer. And he took upon himself all the suffering this world could throw at him.

In Jesus, God laid aside his power. In an act of unparalleled love, Jesus suffered with us and for us. That's how much God cares. You may still wonder why God lets you suffer. But don't ever think that God doesn't care. The suffering of Jesus proves beyond the shadow of a doubt that he really, really does.

Think or Journal

Have you ever suffered so much that it shook your faith in God? How does it help to know that Jesus understands your suffering?