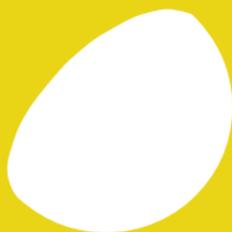


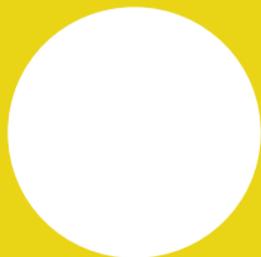
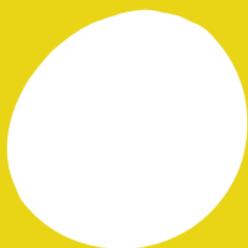
DAILY DEVOTIONS FROM JACK MILLER



S A V I N G



G R A C E



C . J O H N M I L L E R

FOREWORD BY PAUL MILLER

“When it comes to daily devotional books, I look for short vignettes that are truly personal, yet have a powerful punch from God’s Word. And the book you are holding in your hands does just *that*. I have long admired the teachings of Jack Miller and have gained *much* from them in my walk with Christ. And now, Jack’s best insights are collected in this one important volume. If you are looking for a daily devotional that will frame your day in wisdom and godly guidance, this book is for you—I highly recommend *Saving Grace!*”

Joni Eareckson Tada, Founder/CEO Joni and Friends International Disability Center

“We are simple people. We can truly learn, believe, and do only one thing at a time. That’s why this book proves to be so wise and helpful. It invites you to take in one good thing today. This one good thing, taken to heart, changes you. You become brighter, calmer, steadier. You become more grateful, more purposeful, more generous. It’s simply true.”

David Powlison, Executive Director, CCEF;
author

“An opportunity to spend a small portion of each day with Jack Miller! What a gift! Reading Jack’s words is like moving from a storm into a safe harbor and resting in the ancient truths of the gospel . . . words that remind me that no matter where I’ve gone and no matter what I’ve done, I’m loved profoundly by Jesus. Jack ‘smells like

Jesus' and never more than in this little book. Read it and rejoice . . . and then worship."

Steve Brown, Key Life radio broadcaster; professor, Reformed Theological Seminary; author of *Three Free Sins*

"Jack Miller was the most influential pastor and mentor in my life, and, through this devotional, his care for my soul continues."

Edward T. Welch, PhD, CCEF Faculty; psychologist; best-selling author

"What could be better than having Jack Miller help us 'preach the gospel to our own hearts' daily? This is a treasure of grace in daily devotionals that continually take us from self to Christ—our holiness, righteousness, and redemption."

Bryan Chapell, Pastor, Grace Presbyterian Church; president emeritus, Covenant Seminary; author, *Christ-Centered Preaching and Holiness by Grace*

"Okay, I'll own my bias up front. No one has had a greater impact on my life for the gospel than Jack Miller—no one. That being said, I am thrilled, stoked, fired-up, and many other appellations of joy about the publication of *Saving Grace: Daily Devotions from Jack Miller*. Finally, many of you who never got to hear Jack preach will get to savor the gospel-sanity, kingdom joy, and missional

vision of the man who threw the curtains wide open on Jesus and his grace for so many of us. This book may very well become a contemporary gospel classic in devotional literature. Want to understand more about the radical implications and transforming power of God's saving grace? Then order Jack's new book soon.

Dr. Scotty Ward Smith, Founding Pastor of Christ Community Church; Teacher in Residence at West End Community Church; author of *Everyday Prayers: 365 Days to a Gospel-Centered Faith*

“Jack Miller was a work of God's Spirit, and the Spirit used him to change my life. When he preached, he had a way of catching you up in his contagious joy—a joy that flowed directly out of the grace of the gospel. These daily doses of his sermons will have that same humbling, liberating effect. Read them and your life will change!”

Charles Morris, Speaker & President of HAVEN Today

“The gospel is simple, but we often write long and complicated books explaining it. Jack Miller's gift is to take the great truths of the gospel and make them sing again to a simple tune. These short devotions are easy enough for anyone to read, but at the same time as profound and heart-warming as the Scriptures upon which they are based.”

Iain Duguid, PhD, Professor of Old Testament, Westminster Theological Seminary, Philadelphia

“One of the things that has impacted me the most about Jack Miller’s preaching is that he so naturally interweaves our need for spiritual renewal with the expansion of God’s kingdom. That message—the gospel needed to restore my heart is the same gospel that is needed to restore the world—is what first brought me to Serge. In the years that I’ve been the Executive Director of Serge, I have become more deeply convinced that sharing God’s love with the nations is intimately linked to how I experience his love as a beloved son.”

Bob Osborne, Executive Director, Serge (formerly World Harvest Mission)

“This is a wonderful book. It not only captures the heart of Jack Miller’s cross-centered preaching, but it takes us day-by-day back to the cross. Jack urged us to learn to ‘preach the gospel to ourselves every day.’ I can hardly think of a better way to do that than to wake up in the morning or go to sleep at night with the truth of these readings ringing in our souls.”

Stephen Smallman, Author; assistant pastor, New Life Presbyterian Church, Glenside; former executive director, Serge (formerly World Harvest Mission)

“I learned from Jack Miller how the gospel is not just a gate we walk through once but a pathway we walk every day of our lives. And how God takes pleasure in pouring out his power on those who will dare to radically align their purposes with his for the nations. I’ve never been

the same, and neither will you if you prayerfully read and take to heart the riches of the gospel found in these pages.”

Dr. Steve Childers, Founder and President,
Pathway Learning; associate professor of practical
theology, RTS-Orlando

“Like Jacob, who refused to let go of God until he had received a blessing, Jack Miller was tenacious about receiving God’s power and grace. And like Jacob, who was permanently wounded by the angel, Jack found out how powerless he really was in himself to accomplish the goals of holiness and faith. Again, like the patriarch, Jack grew from being a somewhat legalistic person to one who could boldly risk everything for the sake of the gospel. These devotions are brutally honest. Jack was remarkably transparent about who he was, and thus he leads us into our own candid self-appraisal. But he never dangles us in guilt. Instead, he rushes to tell us the good news of God’s unconditional love in Christ. And then, when we falter, he tells us to stop acting like orphans. Savoring these excerpts and then trying them out in practice ought to make new persons out of each of us.”

William Edgar, John Boyer Chair of Evangelism
and Culture, Westminster Theological Seminary,
Philadelphia; author of *Truth in All Its Glory*

“Jesus keeps on giving us hope to make our own lives overflowing in love, first for him and then for everyone; that we learned from Jack. Left to ourselves, we can’t

possibly live with hope in our hard and unloving worlds, but Jesus is there for us. Jack kept on learning that and teaching and living it before us, simply and clearly. The overly familiar gospel became the newest and most beautiful part of our lives.”

D. Clair Davis, Professor Emeritus, Westminster Theological Seminary

“Jack Miller was, in many ways, a pioneer. It’s not that he said anything new, it’s just that to many people it seemed new because the message he trumpeted was so old and had been lost for so long. He spoke of grace the way one is supposed to speak of grace: no buts, no brakes, no qualifications, no footnotes. I am forever grateful to Jack Miller for his unwavering commitment to communicate the inexhaustible grace of God to an exhausted world.”

Tullian Tchividjian, pastor of Coral Ridge Presbyterian Church and author of *One Way Love: Inexhaustible Grace for an Exhausted World*

“Jack Miller writes: ‘Cheer up! You are worse than you think’ and ‘Cheer up! God loves you more than you know!’ And after reading *Saving Grace*, I want to add: cheer up, this is NOT one of those ‘of course, I’ve heard it all before’ daily devotional books. If you can reflect on these mini-exhortations and not come out a more effective servant of God with greater joy, you need to read them again!”

Rev. Dr. Greg Livingstone, Founder, Frontiers

Saving Grace

Daily Devotions
from Jack Miller

C. JOHN MILLER



www.newgrowthpress.com

New Growth Press, Greensboro, NC 27404
Copyright © 2014 by Rose Marie Miller.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopy, recording, or otherwise, without the prior permission of the publisher, except as provided by USA copyright law. Published 2014.

Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are taken from the Holy Bible, English Standard Version®. Copyright © 2000; 2001 by Crossway Bibles, a division of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Scripture verses marked NIV are taken from the Holy Bible, New International Version®. NIV®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984 by International Bible Society. Used by permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved.

Scripture verses marked NASB are taken from the NEW AMERICAN STANDARD BIBLE®, Copyright © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995 by The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission.

Cover Design: Faceout Books, faceoutstudio.com
Typesetting and Interior Design: Lisa Parnell, lparnell.com

ISBN: 978-1-939946-27-0 (Print)
ISBN: 978-1-939946-28-7 (eBook)

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
Miller, C. John.

Saving grace : daily devotions from Jack Miller / C. John Miller.
pages cm

“Selections from Miller’s pioneering sermons”—Publisher’s summary.

ISBN 978-1-939946-27-0 — ISBN 978-1-939946-28-7 (ebook)

1. Devotional calendars. I. Title.

BV4811.M53 2014

242'.2—dc23

2014026780

Printed in Canada

21 20 19 18 17 16 15 14 1 2 3 4 5

Foreword

There is a story behind my father's preaching. It began during a summer in Spain in 1970, when, burned out from teaching at seminary, he immersed himself in God's Word. By the end of the summer he'd become convinced, in a new way, that the promises of the Old Testament prophets still applied today. As a seventeen-year-old, I remember watching him preach at Mechanicsville Chapel in Bucks County, Pennsylvania, thinking, *God is going to do something with my father. You can't be that excited about Jesus and something not happen.*

I say this because Dad is known largely for his Sonship teaching with its emphasis on the gospel. But his passion for the gospel was embedded in his love of the Word and confidence that this is the Age of the Spirit. It was the Spirit of Christ who brought the presence of Jesus to life in the world. Because he believed that, he taught the Word with the expectation that the Spirit would bring change. In the summer of 1971, I remember him teaching Romans 12 to a large group of assorted hippies and church kids. Someone asked him, "When are we going to go on to something else?" Dad replied, "When you start obeying Romans 12!" Then he laughed and continued teaching Romans 12.

No one laughed harder at Dad's jokes than Dad. Most of us were laughing at Dad's laugh, not his jokes, and I'm not sure Dad ever caught on to the difference—but we delighted to see someone who didn't take

Foreword

himself too seriously, who enjoyed life, and who genuinely loved Jesus. It was contagious. I can still see his smile and hear his laugh when I read these devotions. As you read, imagine Dad laughing and smiling as he calls you to repent and obey! A devotional is a particularly good way to hear Dad's preaching. By taking it in small doses, you'll be able to absorb it better. You'll pick up a cadence in Dad's preaching on grace as he woos you and then warns you. As he prods you away from yourself, the love of God will warm your heart.

The heart of Dad's preaching was the gospel. Dad's genius was to read Galatians and Romans *through* the lens of Luke. Dad recognized that Paul and Jesus were saying the same thing. And before he preached the gospel to us, he preached it to himself. Dad *was* the woman at Simon's house weeping at Jesus's feet (Luke 7). Dad *was* the tax collector crying out, "God, be merciful to me, a sinner." Dad *was* the returning prodigal; and he *was* the older brother. He was, as he loved to say, one beggar telling another beggar where to find bread! Enjoy the feast!

Paul Miller

Introduction

Through our many years together, Jack was always telling stories about how Jesus had changed people. Now it's my turn to tell you how the gospel of Jesus Christ changed him. Jack wasn't always so in love with the gospel of grace. In the early 1970s, he was a professor at Westminster Seminary in Philadelphia, and a pastor of a small church. After a few years, he became frustrated with his work in both places, feeling that nothing he did was making a difference in people's lives. So he resigned as a seminary professor and a pastor blaming the institution and his congregation. But, as he said in one of his sermons, it turns out that he was better at detecting pride in others than in himself.

God, in his mercy, did eventually show Jack that his struggles started with *his* pride and self-sufficiency, and he turned to Jesus in repentance and asked for forgiveness and help. He said that his conviction of deep sin and his joy in God's love for him through the cross of Christ was like a conversion. It changed his life and ministry forever. He took back his resignations, and we went on a sabbatical to Spain where for three months he soaked himself in the great missionary promises of the Bible. He returned a changed man. His preaching and teaching were now Christ-centered and, instead of just staying in the classroom and the pulpit, he took the message of God's love for sinners out into the streets and parks, to wherever people gathered. Jack said that

he saw God change more people in the next two years than he had in his many prior years of ministry.

I began to hear the gospel explained with a new passion and clarity, using words I hadn't understood before: *orphans, sons and daughters, flesh and Spirit, repentance and forgiveness, humility and self-righteousness, and faith and legalism*. Jack kept saying, "Believe and you will live." Under his preaching, the new church he planted, New Life, began to grow. We opened our home to all kinds of needy people, including the mentally ill and addicted. Many of these troubled people turned to God and prayed for the grace to live to please him. Eventually the message of God's grace for sinners changed even me—a self-righteous, legalistic, pull-yourself-together-and-then-God-will-love-you kind of sinner.

Ugandan refugees came to Westminster and lived with us too. The deeply troubled world of Uganda under Amin opened up to us and to World Harvest, now Serge—the new mission Jack and others founded on the principles of the gospel.

You have in your hand 366 excerpts from Jack's sermons. They are filled with challenges to understand how deeply broken we are by sin, to go to Christ in repentance and faith, to remember the love of the Father and the gift of the Holy Spirit, and to pray constantly as sons and daughters of the living God. Jack never thought these truths were simply so we could feel

Introduction

better about ourselves or make the Christian life easier. He taught that the gift of the Spirit always overflows to the world and touches others with the good news of repentance and forgiveness of sins. We are the carriers of that gift. It's meant to be shared. Jack shared it with me, the rest of our family, the people at New Life Church, hitchhikers he picked up, men and women he met on the streets, doctors and nurses when he was ill, his seatmates on airplanes, and, eventually with people all over the world. Jack believed and lived the message of the good news of sins forgiven, death destroyed, and life everlasting with the God who loved him.

I was telling a friend about these devotions based on Jack's preaching, and she told me that, after listening to one of Jack's sermons, her thirteen-year-old son went outside to the church parking lot and gave his life to Christ. That was not something Jack did; it was the power of the risen Christ. Jack went to be with Jesus, his faithful Savior and Friend, many years ago. But the power of the gospel to change hearts continues to grow and spread throughout the world. It changed him. It changed me. It can certainly change you. Read these excerpts slowly and prayerfully, asking the Spirit to fill you with the power of the risen Christ. Then go by faith and share the love of Christ with someone else.

Rose Marie Miller

A Note from the Editors

Years ago when I finished putting together my dad's book of letters, *The Heart of a Servant Leader*, I thought our writing partnership was finished. But God had other plans. The opportunity to create a devotional based on his sermons was too good to pass up—Dad's preaching was always the best way to hear the gospel from him.

Dad often has been quoted as saying “Cheer up! You are worse than you think” and “Cheer up! God loves you more than you know!” and as we listened to his sermons and created these devotions that's what we heard—the bad news that we were completely broken by our sins and the good news that the love of the Father sent his Son to die for those sins and give us life in the Spirit now and eternal life with him forever.

Creating this devotional was a joint project with Nancy Winter, Gretchen Logterman, and myself all working together for the last two years. All three of us listened to sermons and created devotions, Nancy and I did the editing, and then Nancy did the hard work of arranging them. In some cases, the devotions consider the same passage of Scripture over several days. At other times, themes and topics are spread throughout each month. I went over the devotions many times to make sure that each one faithfully represents my dad's preaching and the God he loved.

A Note from the Editors

One day when I was talking with Gretchen about listening to the sermons, she said, “Your father’s sermons have been God’s grace to me.” They were also God’s grace to me as every morning I listened to my dad talking about the love of God in Christ for weak, needy sinners like myself. Our hope and prayer is that these devotions will also be God’s grace to you. If you would like to hear more from Dad, his sermons are now available at newgrowthpress.com.

Barbara Miller Juliani
Nancy Winter
Gretchen Logterman

January 1

Because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his
Son into our hearts, crying, “Abba! Father!”
Galatians 4:6

Because God has made you his child, you don't have to view yourself as an orphan any more, but as an insider, as someone who belongs. God sent his Son to set us free from the law and has now enabled us to be in fellowship with him by giving us his Spirit who lives inside us and cries, “Abba, Father.” We are no longer orphans, no longer slaves, but sons and daughters who can afford to be honest because we belong to our heavenly Father. We're part of his spiritual family through faith in his Son.

Being God's dearly loved child means that we can start to think spiritually. We learn to think God's way; to see our experiences—especially the painful ones—through the eyes of Christ. What are the areas in your life where you think like an orphan? Where are you living as if there is no God, no forgiveness, no hope, and no Holy Spirit to change you and others? Identify and reject an orphan viewpoint in yourself.

Listen to the gospel of Jesus Christ by faith. When you believe the gospel of Jesus Christ, it changes you. When you hear by faith, powerful living follows—a life characterized by faith that expresses itself in loving others in amazing ways.

January 2

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. John 1:14

Did you know that the way up is down? The idea of the highest becoming the lowest brings with it a view of glory that is hard to digest. We think of glory as ambition realized, fame accomplished. Jesus's glory, however, is revealed in his humility and suffering on the cross.

In the same way, his glory is revealed in you as you suffer and as you are humbled. The idea is that you go down before you go across; that you humble yourself and become Christlike in your love and tenderness and kindness, before you go across to your neighbor or across the seas to anybody else. Only as you get down on your knees in prayer and acknowledge your neediness does God really teach you and use you. Sadly, we often go in the opposite direction. We try to build ourselves up so we can be strong and minister to people out of our strength. Our idea of salvation is to get stronger, clean ourselves up, and get nearer to God, all in our own strength by our own willpower. Instead, the gospel is that Jesus went all the way down to the pit to save you. He doesn't save good people; he saves sinners. There's where the power is: when you know who you really are, you tell him the truth, and he meets you.

January 3

Count it all joy . . . when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. James 1:2-3

Jesus may have been tempted to come down off the cross, but he didn't; he endured to the end. Hebrews 2:10 speaks of Jesus being made perfect through suffering. This does not mean that Jesus went from a sinful state to a sinless state; instead, it means that he went from a less mature state to a more mature state. This involved a strengthening of his character, so he could endure the unendurable experience of bearing away our sins.

If Jesus had to be strengthened, we too have to be strengthened for our particular callings. Perseverance is developed through testing. During the process, you will begin to have joy as you let go of things. One of the reasons we are joyless is that we're afraid of what *might* happen, or we're disappointed by what *did* happen. Sometimes what happened causes me to be afraid of what might happen. But perseverance through the struggle begins to change our whole way of seeing things. As we persevere we begin to let go of the baggage we carry. Sometimes our baggage has to be almost ripped from our hands, but as we release it, joy comes because there are fewer things acting as a barrier between God and ourselves.