

Wednesday, April 8, 2026

This week's devotionals were written by Anneke de Jong, a member of Visalia CRC. A lifetime of studying the Bible has given me a deep love for God's Word and a heart for helping others grow in biblical literacy. My husband and I raised four sons, and we now enjoy watching their families grow. When I'm not with our grandkids, you can find me at our goat dairy in Hanford, CA.

As you come to your time with God today, pause for a moment of silence before beginning with this prayer:

Holy, Holy, Holy are you Lord God Almighty - who was, and is, and is to come.

Open my eyes, that I may see you. Open my ears, that I may hear you.

Open my heart, that I may know you and love you more and more each day.

Amen

Our passage for today is found in Isaiah 57:15-16.

For this is what the high and exalted One says—

he who lives forever, whose name is holy:

"I live in a high and holy place,

but also with the one who is contrite and lowly in spirit,

to revive the spirit of the lowly

and to revive the heart of the contrite.

I will not accuse them forever,

nor will I always be angry,

for then they would faint away because of me—

the very people I have created.

These ancient words from Isaiah might be some of the most remarkable in all of Scripture.

They come in the middle of a chapter that captures the realities of life in a very broken world. At that time, God's people were facing the threat of exile and devastation as a result of their disobedience to Him. If you read through Isaiah 57:1-13, you'll get a clear picture of a world mocking God and burning in rebellion against Him.

Today, we don't have to look very far to see the same scenes. The consequences of sin and the devastation caused by rebellion against God are all too visible. Both outside the church, and unfortunately also sometimes inside it, we see injustice, idolatry and the worship of self, stuff, power, and greed. All around us lives are ruined by evil.

We often experience the effects ourselves, and we begin to feel crushed and beaten down. Our spirits are broken. A holy God can feel so far away and unapproachable. And we can be tempted to imagine God as some distant, uncaring deity who's sitting back watching his creation crash and burn.

Who will we call out to? Who will hear our cry?

Will we turn to our idols of self-reliance or power? To politicians, podcasters or the newest voice on the scene? Will our careers, our families, our successes or our hard work be the place we go for refuge and comfort?

Or will we turn to our Creator and take refuge in our holy, holy, holy God?

"This is what the high and exalted One says -

He who lives forever, whose name is holy:

I live in a high and holy place,

but also with the one who is contrite and lowly in spirit.

To revive the spirit of the lowly

And to revive the heart of the contrite."

Let that sink in for a moment. God lives in a high and holy place, but also with the one who is contrite and lowly in spirit.

Bible scholars, much more educated than I am, say that the word contrite also means crushed or broken. It's the same word used in Isaiah 53:5, where Isaiah prophesies that Jesus *"will be pierced for our transgression and crushed for our sins."*

When the effects of sin and the sorrows of this world threaten to crush us, when our hearts are broken, and our spirits are humbled, the only place to turn that offers real peace is to our holy God. He is the only One who can revive our spirit and heart.

The crushing burden of sin and its effects on the world were put upon Jesus so we can be revived to live lives free from God's anger at sin. *"The punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed."* (Isaiah 53:5) Free to be the very people He created us to be.

Poor in spirit, contrite, meek and lowly. These are not descriptions that the world applauds or celebrates. But they are the very people that our holy God promises to live with.

Jesus said, *"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of God. Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth"* (Matthew 5:3&5). Only a holy God can dwell in both heaven and earth. His kingdom extends from the high and holy places to the depths of the human heart.

How have you experienced the presence of God in the midst of the brokenness of this world?

What does it look like for God to revive your heart and your spirit?

Pray that God will fill you with his presence and his life, so that you can bring his peace into this broken and hurting world.