



## IMAGINE

August 2018

*God is faithful, who has called you into fellowship with his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.*

1 Corinthians 1:9

Have you ever wondered how it might have been to be like Jesus in the situation I'll describe below? Have you ever before tried to put yourself in Jesus' shoes? That's not sacrilegious thinking. Not at all. It's a way of drawing close to him, to really get to know him. It's a way of coming into fellowship with him. Imagine what Jesus is like and what he feels.

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Some people don't want to accept Christ's gift of forgiveness, though he went through excruciating pain to make it available to us. I'm sure Jesus must have been an extremely sensitive person, more than any of us are. He must have felt deeply to love us in the way he did—and as he still does. His isn't an everyday kind of love. He has greater love than we could ever imagine.

And so, can you imagine how it must have felt to die the way he did, though he had done no wrong? Can you imagine how it must have hurt him to go through the emotional, physical, and spiritual suffering? Alone. Abandoned by most. Memories of the good he had done—at least for a time—forgotten.

And he did it all on our behalf. He gave his life willingly so we wouldn't have to carry the burden of guilt for the wrongs we've done.

Now imagine this:

If you were Jesus, offering a person forgiveness for her sins, saying, "I'll take the sin you feel so badly about from you. You don't have to carry it anymore. What I did was for you. It is my free gift. I would be happy if you'd let me give it to you."

Again, imagine if you were Jesus, and a person refused your gift, though you had offered it in love, though you had so much wanted her to accept it. Though you had sacrificed so much for it, even becoming despised and rejected by others and dying for it . . .

. . . And after all that, the wonderful gift you were making available is turned down. Not wanted.

How would you feel?

I know how I'd feel. I would be deeply hurt. The pain I would suffer then would be added to the pain I had already suffered on the cross. Is that the way it is for Jesus? Does he suffer again and again, every time someone refuses his gift? I kind of think he might. I know I would.

Jesus died out of great love for us. He wants to be a part of our life. He wants to have a loving partnership with us.

By accepting his gift of forgiveness, we can. And our lives will change.

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