

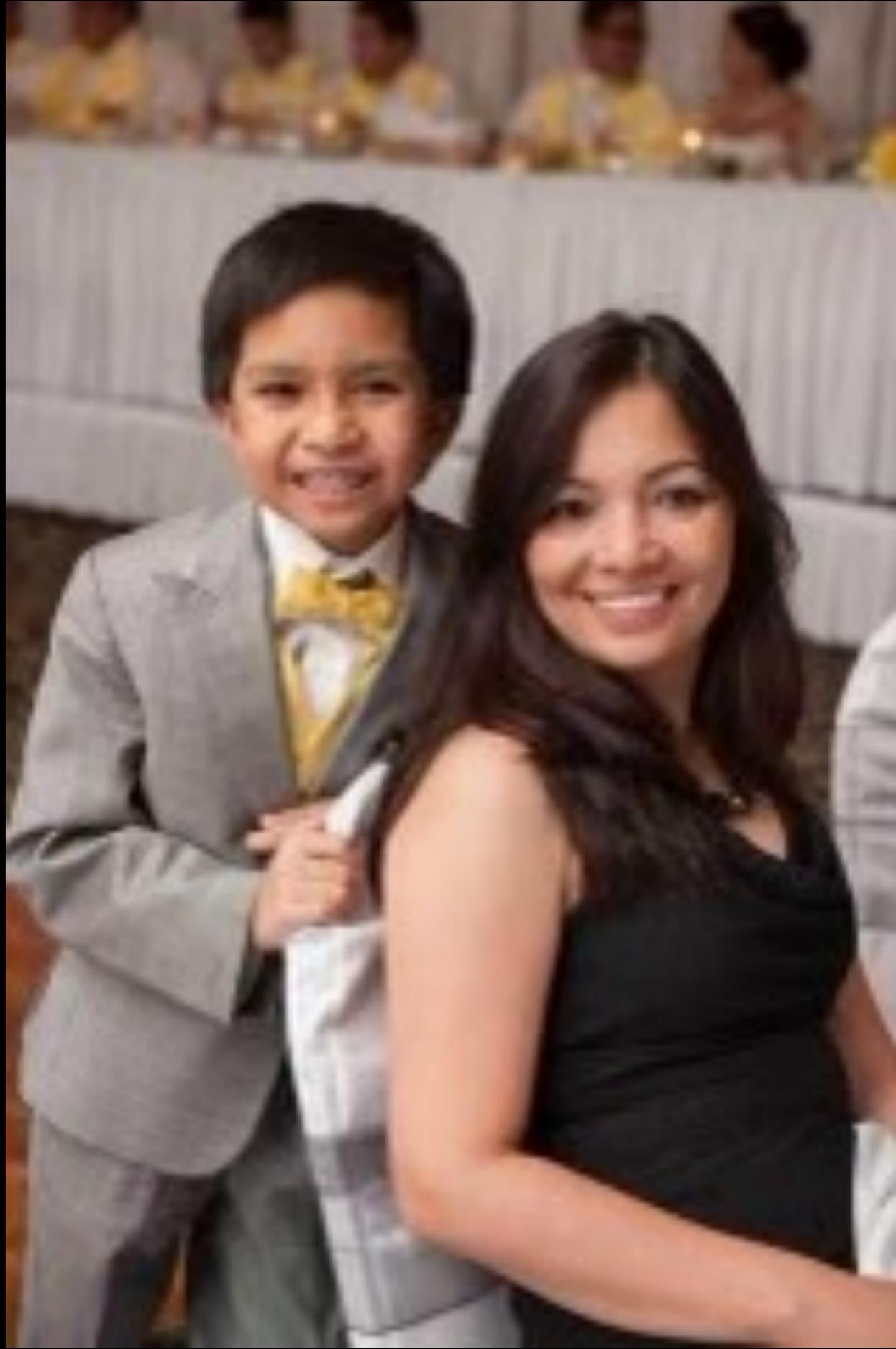


**Maria
“Gemma”
Armea**

(Dec 26, 1966-
Nov 22, 2021)







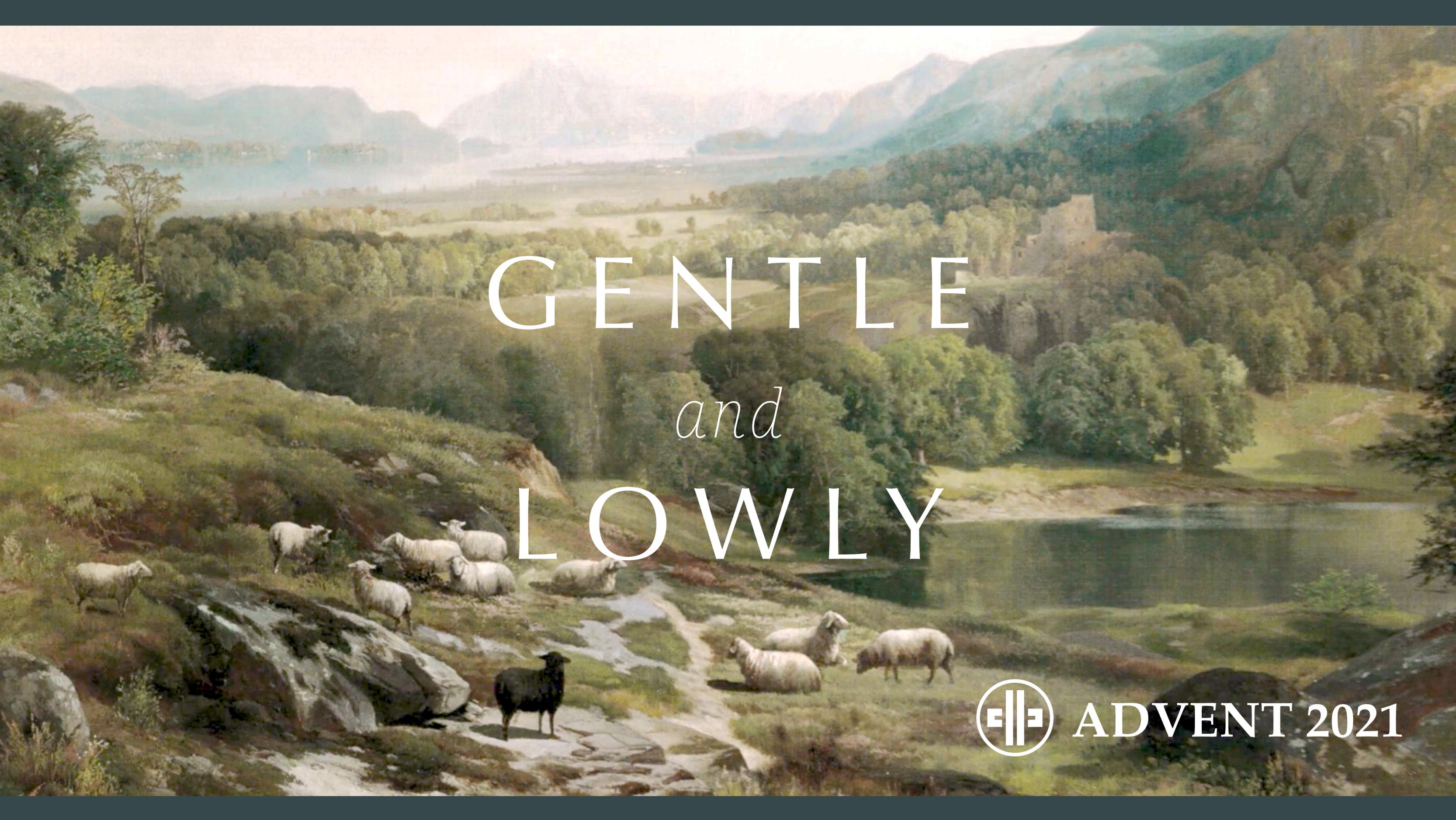
A detailed landscape painting of a valley. In the foreground, a flock of sheep, including one black sheep, is gathered on a rocky path. The middle ground shows a lush green valley with a winding river and a small stone building. The background features rolling hills and mountains under a soft, hazy sky.

GENTLE
and
LOWLY



ADVENT
2021

“God’s Heart
for Sinners”

A detailed landscape painting of a valley. In the foreground, a herd of sheep, including one black sheep, is gathered on a rocky path. The middle ground features a lush green valley with a large lake and a stone ruin. The background shows rolling hills and mountains under a soft, hazy sky.

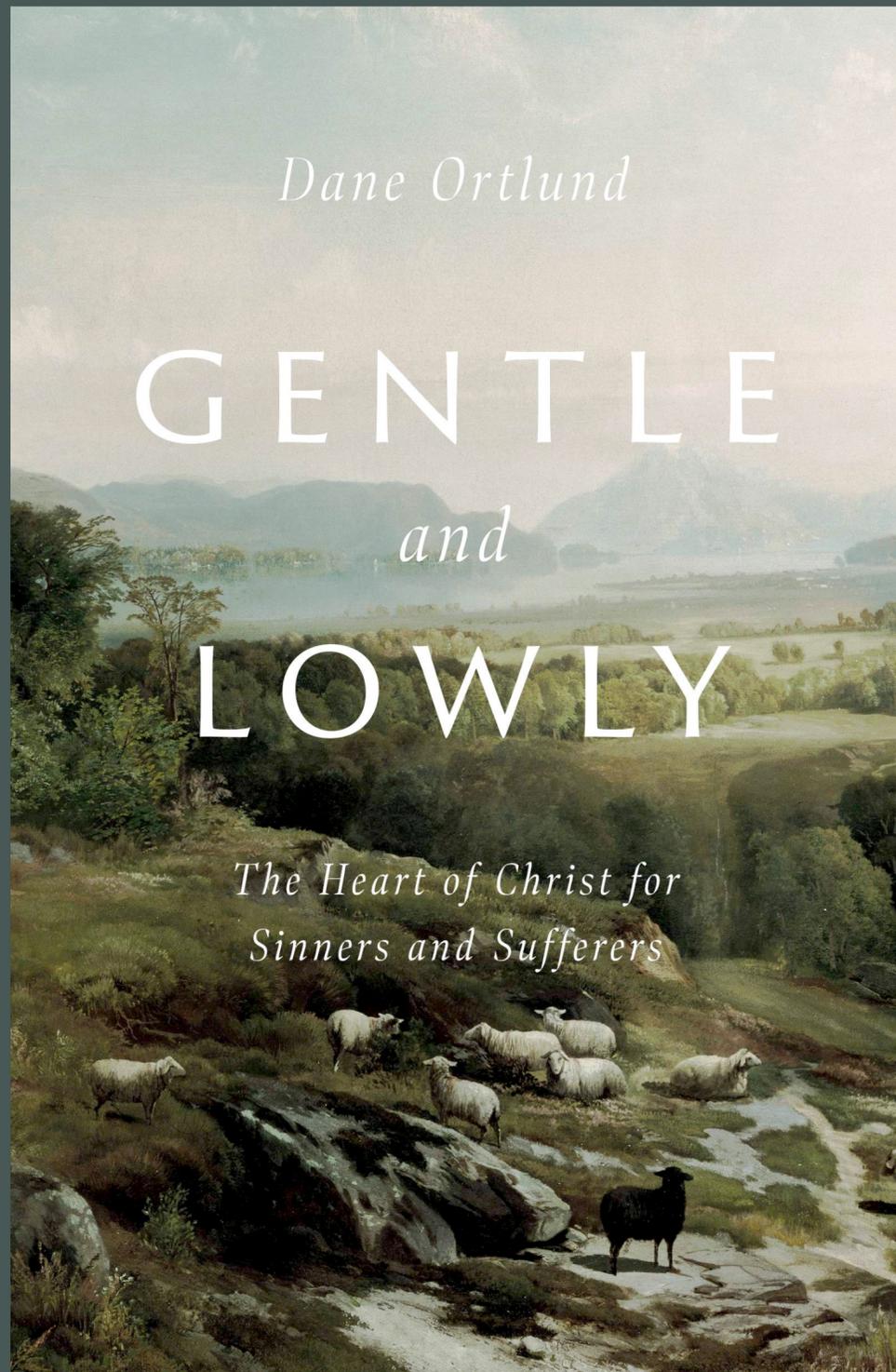
GENTLE

and

LOWLY



ADVENT 2021



- ▶ a copy for every household
- ▶ basis for our Advent sermon series
- ▶ read through it during Advent
- ▶ share insights and convictions with one another



Dane
Ortlund

This book is written for the discouraged, the frustrated, the weary, the disenchanted, the cynical, the empty. Those running on fumes. Those whose Christian lives feel like constantly running up a descending escalator. Those of us who find ourselves thinking: “How could I mess up that bad—again?” It is for that increasing suspicion that God’s patience with us is wearing thin. For those of us who know God loves us but suspect we have deeply disappointed him.

Gentle and Lowly





Dane
Ortlund

Who have told others of the love of Christ yet wonder if—as for us—he harbors mild resentment. Who wonder if we have shipwrecked our lives beyond what can be repaired. Who are convinced we’ve permanently diminished our usefulness to the Lord. Who have been swept off our feet by perplexing pain and are wondering how we can keep living under such numbing darkness. . . . It is written, in other words, for normal Christians. In short,

Gentle and Lowly





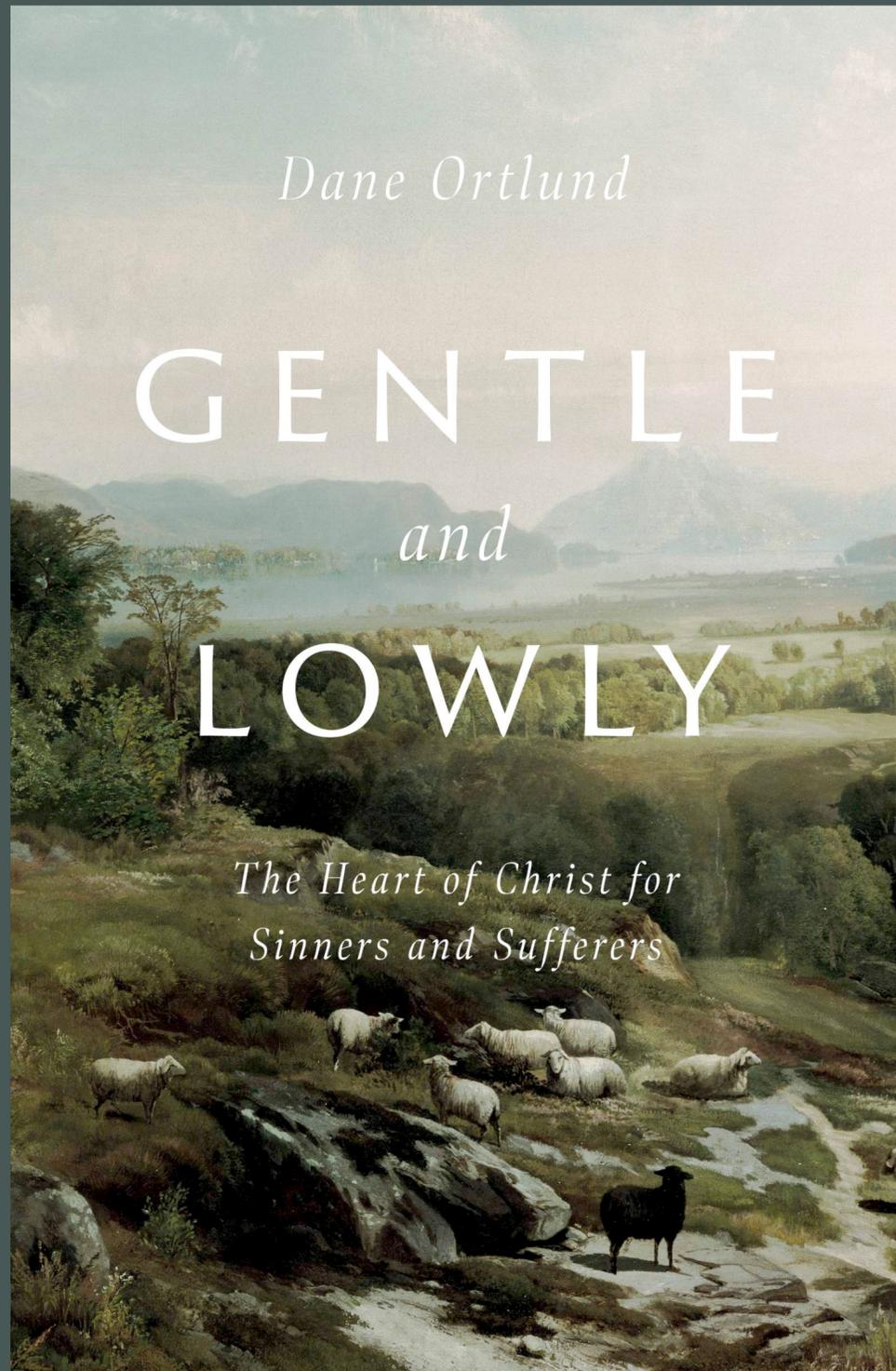
Dane
Ortlund

it is for sinners and sufferers. How does Jesus feel about them?

... You might know that Christ died and rose again on your behalf to rinse you clean of all your sin; but do you know his deepest heart for you? ... It is one thing to know the doctrines of the incarnation and the atonement and a hundred other vital doctrines. It is another, more searching matter to know his heart for you.

Gentle and Lowly





“God’s Heart Toward Sinners”

- ▶ Ch.6: I Will Never Cast Out
- ▶ Ch. 7: What Our Sins Evoke
- ▶ Ch. 12: A Tender Friend
- ▶ Ch. 18: Yearning Bowels

Psalm
78:40-41

How often they rebelled against him
in the wilderness and grieved him in
the wasteland! Again and again they
put God to the test; they vexed the
Holy One of Israel.



Isaiah 65:1-3

I revealed myself to those who did not ask for me; I was found by those who did not seek me. To a nation that did not call on my name, I said, 'Here am I, here am I.' All day long I have held out my hands to an obstinate people, who walk in ways not good, pursuing their own imaginations—a people who continually provoke me to my very face, offering sacrifices in gardens and burning incense on altars of brick



Hosea 11:1-3

When Israel was a child, I loved him,
and out of Egypt I called my son. But
the more they were called, the more they
went away from me. They sacrificed to
the Baals and they burned incense to
images. It was I who taught Ephraim to
walk, taking them by the arms; but they
did not realize it was I who healed them.



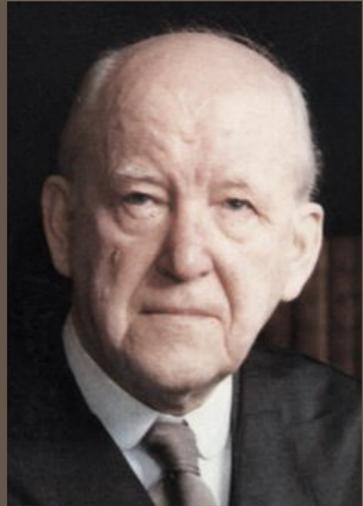
Malachi

1:6-7

“A son honors his father, and a slave his master. If I am a father, where is the honor due me? If I am a master, where is the respect due me?” says the LORD Almighty. “It is you priests who show contempt for my name. **“But you ask, ‘How have we shown contempt for your name?’**”

“By offering defiled food on my altar. **“But you ask, ‘How have we defiled you?’** “By saying that the LORD’S table is contemptible.





Martyn
Lloyd-
Jones

You will never make yourself feel that you are a sinner, because there is a mechanism in you as a result of sin that will always be defending you against every accusation. We are all on very good terms with ourselves, and we can always put up a good case for ourselves.





Hosea 11:7-9

My people are bent on turning away from me, and though they call out to the Most High, he shall not raise them up at all. How can I give you up, O Ephraim? How can I hand you over, O Israel? How can I make you like Admah? How can I treat you like Zeboiim? My heart recoils within me; my compassion grows warm and tender. I will not execute my burning anger; I will not again destroy Ephraim; **for I am God and not a man, the** Holy One in your midst, and I will not come in wrath.





Dane
Ortlund

We are given a rare glimpse into the very center of who God is, and we see and feel the deeply affectional convulsing within the very being of God. His heart is inflamed with pity and compassion for his people. He simply cannot give them up. Nothing could cause him to abandon them. They are his.

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We read: *I am God and not a man, the Holy One in your midst, and I will not come in wrath.*

Is that what you expect God to say?

Don't you actually, deep down, expect him to say the following, with one small word change?

I am God and not a man, the Holy One in your midst, and I will therefore come in wrath.

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... The sins of those who belong to God open the floodgates of his heart of compassion for us. The dam breaks. It is not our loveliness that wins his love. It is our unloveliness.

Our hearts gasp to catch up with this. It is not how the world around us works. It is not how our own hearts work. But we bow in humble submission, letting God set the terms by which he will love us.

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for whoever touches you touches the apple of his eye
Zechariah 2:8

Jeremiah 31:20

Is not Ephraim my dear son, the child in whom I delight? Though I often speak against him, I still remember him. Therefore my heart yearns for him; I have great compassion for him,” declares the LORD.





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Whom do you perceive him to be, *in* your sin and your suffering? Who do you think God is—not just on paper but in the kind of person you believe is hearing you when you pray? How does he feel about you? His saving of us is not cool and calculating. It is a matter of yearning—not yearning for the Facebook you, the you that you project to everyone around you. Not the you that you wish you were.

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Yearning for the real you. The you underneath everything you present to others.

... The world is starving for a yearning love, a love that remembers instead of forsakes. A love that isn't tied to our loveliness. A love that gets down underneath our messiness. A love that is bigger than the enveloping darkness we might be walking through even today. A love of which even the very best human romance is the faintest of whispers.

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When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. (Matt 9:36)





The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, 'Here is a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners.' (Matt 11:19)



Dane
Ortlund

It is not his disciples but his antagonists who most clearly perceive who [Jesus] is. Though the crowds call him the friend of sinners as an indictment, the label is one of unspeakable comfort for those who know themselves to be sinners. That Jesus is friend to sinners is only contemptible to those who feel themselves not to be in that category. What does it mean that Christ is a friend to sinners? At the very least, it means that he enjoys spending time with them. It also means that they feel welcome and comfortable around him.

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Dallas
Willard

Prayer to the God of Israel and of Jesus, the living and personal God of the universe, is *intelligent conversation about matters of mutual concern.*





Deuteronomy 31:6

Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the LORD your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you.