

Walking Together in the Word

Devotions on the Weekly Scripture Readings for August 2024

The purpose of the Chapel Devotion Project is to encourage individuals and families to make prayer and devotional time in God's Word a regular part of their daily lives. We believe many good things will come from your intentional study and reflection of God's Word:

- Your relationship with God and with others will grow and be strengthened.
- Study of the Scripture and hymns for the upcoming weekend will enhance your worship.
- You will come to the Lord daily in prayer, bringing your praise, thanks, and requests to Him.

How to Use These Devotions

Each week contains five pages of devotional material. How you choose to use the material is up to you. You could study one reading or one page a day. You might read several portions every other day. You may use the short order of worship provided below. Use the material in the way that best fits you and your family.

ORDER OF WORSHIP

Leader: In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.
All: Amen.

SCRIPTURE READING

DEVOTION and REFLECTION

PRAYERS and THE LORD'S PRAYER

LUTHER'S MORNING PRAYER

I thank You, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have kept me this night from all harm and danger; and I pray that You would keep me this day also from sin and every evil, that all my doings and life may please You. For into Your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let Your holy angel be with me, that the evil foe may have no power over me. Amen.

or

LUTHER'S EVENING PRAYER

I thank You, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have graciously kept me this day; and I pray that You would forgive me all my sins where I have done wrong, and graciously keep me this night. For into Your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let Your holy angel be with me, that the evil foe may have no power over me. Amen.

Leader: The almighty and merciful God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, bless us and keep us.
All: Amen.

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Devotions and supporting material written by Pastor Ted Laesch and Mary Laesch.

Walking Together in the Word

July 29–August 3, 2024

This devotional material is based on Bible readings for Sunday, August 4.

Proper 13

The Gospel: John 6:22–35

22 The next day the crowd that had stayed on the opposite shore of the lake realized that only one boat had been there, and that Jesus had not entered it with his disciples, but that they had gone away alone. 23 Then some boats from Tiberias landed near the place where the people had eaten the bread after the Lord had given thanks. 24 Once the crowd realized that neither Jesus nor his disciples were there, they got into the boats and went to Capernaum in search of Jesus. 25 When they found him on the other side of the lake, they asked him, “Rabbi, when did you get here?” 26 Jesus answered, “Very truly I tell you, you are looking for me, not because you saw the signs I performed but because you ate the loaves and had your fill. 27 Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. For on him God the Father has placed his seal of approval.”

28 Then they asked him, “What must we do to do the works God requires?”

29 Jesus answered, “The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent.”

30 So they asked him, “What sign then will you give that we may see it and believe you? What will you do? 31 Our ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written: ‘He gave them bread from heaven to eat.’” 32 Jesus said to them, “Very truly I tell you, it is not Moses who has given you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. 33 For the bread of God is the bread that comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.” 34 “Sir,” they said, “always give us this bread.” 35 Then Jesus declared, “I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.”

Devotion on the Gospel

I wonder how many times one of my kids comes into the kitchen, opens up the fridge, and says: “I’m hungry! What’s there to eat?” It’s amazing how often that happens. You’d think we didn’t feed them!

Maybe next time that happens, next time they say, “I’m hungry! What’s there to eat?” I should say to them, “Just go open up your Bible.” They probably wouldn’t like that too much. But that’s essentially what Jesus says here in John 6.

Jesus says to the crowds looking for a miraculous feeding: You’re looking for food that satisfies, but it only satisfies for a little while and then you will be hungry again. What you really need is the bread that comes from heaven, the bread that comes from my Father, a bread that will satisfy you—really satisfy you, a bread that gives true life.

You see, Jesus is painting a picture of what our walk of faith is all about. It’s about feeding on the Word of God. It’s about growing in that Word. It’s about being sustained by that Word and being equipped by that Word.

And God gives us that Word—in worship, in Bible class, in Sunday school, in devotion time, with a Bible app on our phone, through mutual encouragement with our brothers and sisters in Christ—He feeds us! He points to Himself and says, “I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry and he who believes in me will never be thirsty.”

And as God feeds us with that wonderful food, He is building us up, strengthening us, sustaining us, nourishing us—so we can work for Him, so we can serve Him, so we can love Him, so we can love others.

Notes, Thoughts, Questions

Why do you think that Jesus referred to Himself as the bread of life?

Jesus’ “I am the bread of life” is one of the seven “I am” statements of Jesus. Look in John 8, 10, 11, 14, 15 and list the other six statements.

Notes, Thoughts, Questions

What did Moses make the people see regarding their grumbling against him and Aaron?

How did the people react to finding the "thin flakes like frost on the ground" when the dew burned off?

"One body" is a metaphor Paul uses to picture the unity of Christians. Who is the Head of the body? Who are the body parts? What kinds of works do we do for each other? What drives all that we do?

What are the two main goals that Christ enables and empowers us to pursue together? (see vs. 13)

The Old Testament Reading: Exodus 16:2-15

2 In the desert the whole community grumbled against Moses and Aaron. 3 The Israelites said to them, "If only we had died by the Lord's hand in Egypt! There we sat around pots of meat and ate all the food we wanted, but you have brought us out into this desert to starve this entire assembly to death." 4 Then the Lord said to Moses, "I will rain down bread from heaven for you. The people are to go out each day and gather enough for that day. In this way I will test them and see whether they will follow my instructions. 5 On the sixth day they are to prepare what they bring in, and that is to be twice as much as they gather on the other days." 6 So Moses and Aaron said to all the Israelites, "In the evening you will know that it was the Lord who brought you out of Egypt, 7 and in the morning you will see the glory of the Lord, because he has heard your grumbling against him. Who are we, that you should grumble against us?" 8 Moses also said, "You will know that it was the Lord when he gives you meat to eat in the evening and all the bread you want in the morning, because he has heard your grumbling against him. Who are we? You are not grumbling against us, but against the Lord." 9 Then Moses told Aaron, "Say to the entire Israelite community, 'Come before the Lord, for he has heard your grumbling.'" 10 While Aaron was speaking to the whole Israelite community, they looked toward the desert, and there was the glory of the Lord appearing in the cloud. 11 The Lord said to Moses, 12 "I have heard the grumbling of the Israelites. Tell them, 'At twilight you will eat meat, and in the morning you will be filled with bread. Then you will know that I am the Lord your God.'" 13 That evening quail came and covered the camp, and in the morning there was a layer of dew around the camp. 14 When the dew was gone, thin flakes like frost on the ground appeared on the desert floor. 15 When the Israelites saw it, they said to each other, "What is it?" For they did not know what it was. Moses said to them, "It is the bread the Lord has given you to eat."

The Epistle: Ephesians 4:1-16

4 As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. 2 Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. 3 Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. 4 There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; 5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism; 6 one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. 7 But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it. 8 This is why it says: "When he ascended on high, he took many captives and gave gifts to his people." 9 (What does "he ascended" mean except that he also descended to the lower, earthly regions? 10 He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe.) 11 So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, 12 to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up 13 until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. 14 Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming. 15 Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. 16 From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

The Psalm: Psalm 145:10-21

All your works praise you, Lord;
your faithful people extol you.
11 They tell of the glory of your kingdom
and speak of your might,
12 so that all people may know of your mighty acts
and the glorious splendor of your kingdom.
13 Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom,
and your dominion endures through all generations.
The Lord is trustworthy in all he promises
and faithful in all he does
14 The Lord upholds all who fall
and lifts up all who are bowed down.
15 The eyes of all look to you,
and you give them their food at the proper time.
16 You open your hand
and satisfy the desires of every living thing.
17 The Lord is righteous in all his ways
and faithful in all he does.
18 The Lord is near to all who call on him,
to all who call on him in truth.
19 He fulfills the desires of those who fear him;
he hears their cry and saves them.
20 The Lord watches over all who love him,
but all the wicked he will destroy.
21 My mouth will speak in praise of the Lord.
Let every creature praise his holy name
for ever and ever.

Notes, Thoughts, Questions

Psalm 145 is a psalm of praise. It is also an acrostic psalm because each verse begins with a different letter of the Hebrew alphabet. Take some time and write your own acrostic psalm of praise to God. Use "ABC..." or even the word like "PRAISE"

*Verse to Remember:
Psalm 145:15-16*

The psalmist expresses the gracious faithfulness of God in this psalm. List ways that God has been faithful to you or your family. Using your list, pray a prayer of thanksgiving to God.

Notes, Thoughts, Questions

What do you think it means that Jesus is described as "Living Bread" especially in relation to the Lord's Supper? Why is the word "living" important?

The Hymn: O Living Bread from Heaven *LSB 642*

O living Bread from heaven,
How well You feed your guest!
The gifts that You have given
Have filled my heart with rest.
Oh, wondrous food of blessing,
Oh, cup that heals our woes!
My heart, this gift possessing,
With praises overflows.

My Lord, You here have led me
To this most holy place
And with Yourself have fed me
The treasures of Your grace;
For You have freely given
What earth could never buy,
The bread of life from heaven,
That now I shall not die.

You gave me all I wanted;
This food can death destroy.
And You have freely granted
The cup of endless joy.
My Lord, I do not merit
The favor You have shown,
And all my soul and spirit
Bow down before Your throne.

Lord, grant me then, thus strengthened
With heav'nly food, while here
My course on earth is lengthened,
To serve with holy fear.
And when You call my spirit
To leave this world below,
I enter, through Your merit,
Where joys unmingled flow.

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Faith + Life Connections

What food do you go for when you're really hungry? A hamburger? A big slice of bread with butter? A smoothie? God has given us so many good foods to satisfy our hunger! But we also need spiritual food. What's spiritual food? God's Word! God's Word fills us up with His love, His forgiveness, and His joy. It's the best kind of food!

John 6:22-35

God's people were hungry. God gave them food to eat. God's people were thirsty. He gave them water. God gave them everything they needed. He gives us all we need, too! What has God given you?

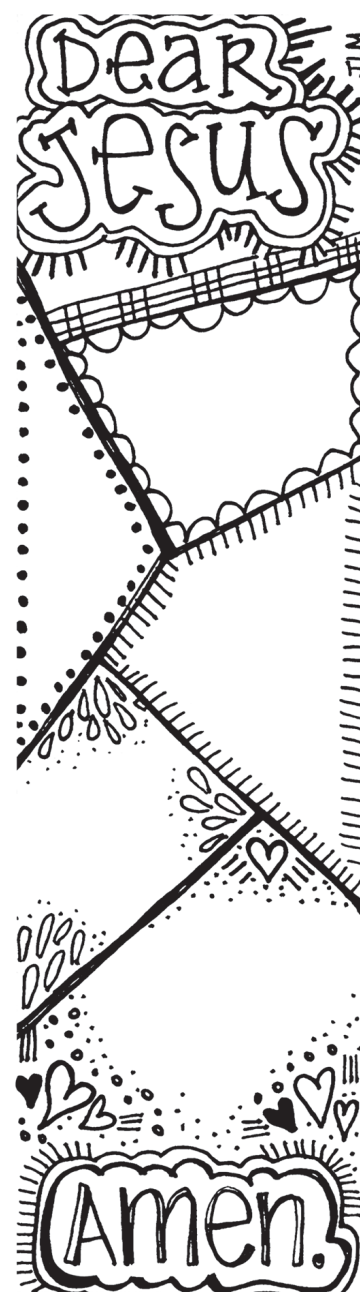
Exodus 16:2-15

Think about how your body works. Your head, arms, legs all work together, right? God calls all believers one "body." We are all important. We all work together to share the love of Jesus with others!

Ephesians 4:1-16

Memorize:

The eyes of all look to you, and you give them their food at the proper time. You open your hand and satisfy the desires of every living thing.
Psalms 145:15-16



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Devote Yourself to Prayer *Colossians 4:2*

Throughout the week, write prayers of praise, thanksgiving, and requests on slips of paper and place them in your prayer bowl. Take turns praying when you gather for devotions.

Walking Together in the Word

August 5–August 10, 2024

This devotional material is based on Bible readings for Sunday, August 11.

Proper 14

The Gospel: John 6:35–51

35 Then Jesus declared, "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty. 36 But as I told you, you have seen me and still you do not believe. 37 All those the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never drive away. 38 For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me. 39 And this is the will of him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all those he has given me, but raise them up at the last day. 40 For my Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise them up at the last day." 41 At this the Jews there began to grumble about him because he said, "I am the bread that came down from heaven." 42 They said, "Is this not Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How can he now say, 'I came down from heaven'?" 43 "Stop grumbling among yourselves," Jesus answered. 44 "No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws them, and I will raise them up at the last day. 45 It is written in the Prophets: 'They will all be taught by God.' Everyone who has heard the Father and learned from him comes to me. 46 No one has seen the Father except the one who is from God; only he has seen the Father. 47 Very truly I tell you, the one who believes has eternal life. 48 I am the bread of life. 49 Your ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness, yet they died. 50 But here is the bread that comes down from heaven, which anyone may eat and not die. 51 I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats this bread will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."

Devotion on the Gospel

That crowd in John 6 just didn't get it. They had watched and listened to Jesus. They had seen the miracles of Jesus. In fact, they had witnessed Jesus feed 5000 men, plus women and children! But they didn't get it. They wanted more. Another miraculous sign. More food. More bread.

And so Jesus taught: I am the bread of life, the living bread from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread he will live forever. This bread is my flesh which I will give for the life of the world. But they didn't get it. They started to argue sharply among themselves. And a little later, many in the crowd turned away and followed Him no more. Jesus offers the heavenly, life-giving bread and what does the crowd do? They turn their backs on Jesus, the very bread of life.

The devil tempts each of us to do the same. Satan tempts us to turn from Jesus, the very bread of life, to follow the John 6 crowd, and to go our own way. That's the devil's temptation.

But Jesus is the bread of life. And He calls us to follow, to believe, to be fed. Jesus is the bread of life and we know that, and believe that, and will not be tempted to be fed by anyone else. Jesus has the words of eternal life and we will follow Him.

Jesus is the good shepherd. He is the light of the world. He is the resurrection and the life. He is the way and the truth and the life. Jesus is the bread of life. Oh, we will not follow that John 6 crowd. We will not turn our backs on Jesus. No, we will believe, follow, and feed on the living bread from heaven.

Notes, Thoughts, Questions

The crowd does not see Jesus as the source of life. What do they see Him as? (6:42)

Jesus used several metaphors to describe Himself, including life, light, bread, and water. How important are these things to our daily lives? How important is Christ to our spiritual lives?

Notes, Thoughts, Questions

How is it that this prophet of God, who had enjoyed a triumph at Mount Carmel (see chapter 18), now despondently prayed that he might die?

How did the Lord respond to his prayer?

What does Paul say Christians should "put off?" What should we "put on?" (see 4:22-24)

Paul encourages us to have godly attitudes and character. What four attitudes does he share that are key to the Christian life? (see 4:32-5:2)

*Verse to Remember:
Ephesians 4:32*

The Old Testament Reading: 1 Kings 19:1-8

Now Ahab told Jezebel everything Elijah had done and how he had killed all the prophets with the sword. 2 So Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah to say, "May the gods deal with me, be it ever so severely, if by this time tomorrow I do not make your life like that of one of them."

3 Elijah was afraid and ran for his life. When he came to Beersheba in Judah, he left his servant there, 4 while he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness. He came to a broom bush, sat down under it and prayed that he might die. "I have had enough, Lord," he said. "Take my life; I am no better than my ancestors." 5 Then he lay down under the bush and fell asleep.

All at once an angel touched him and said, "Get up and eat." 6 He looked around, and there by his head was some bread baked over hot coals, and a jar of water. He ate and drank and then lay down again.

7 The angel of the Lord came back a second time and touched him and said, "Get up and eat, for the journey is too much for you." 8 So he got up and ate and drank. Strengthened by that food, he traveled forty days and forty nights until he reached Horeb, the mountain of God.

The Epistle: Ephesians 4:17-5:2

17 So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking. 18 They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts. 19 Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, and they are full of greed.

20 That, however, is not the way of life you learned 21 when you heard about Christ and were taught in him in accordance with the truth that is in Jesus. 22 You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; 23 to be made new in the attitude of your minds; 24 and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.

25 Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to your neighbor, for we are all members of one body. 26 "In your anger do not sin: Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, 27 and do not give the devil a foothold. 28 Anyone who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with their own hands, that they may have something to share with those in need.

29 Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. 30 And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. 31 Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. 32 Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you. 5 1 Follow God's example, therefore, as dearly loved children 2 and walk in the way of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

The Psalm: Psalm 34:1-8

- I will extol the Lord at all times;
his praise will always be on my lips.
2 I will glory in the Lord;
let the afflicted hear and rejoice.
3 Glorify the Lord with me;
let us exalt his name together.
4 I sought the Lord, and he answered me;
he delivered me from all my fears.
5 Those who look to him are radiant;
their faces are never covered with shame.
6 This poor man called, and the Lord heard him;
he saved him out of all his troubles.
7 The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear him,
and he delivers them.
8 Taste and see that the Lord is good;
blessed is the one who takes refuge in him.

*Your new self
is created to be
like God in true*



Notes, Thoughts, Questions

The superscription notes that this psalm was written when David was delivered when he pretended to be insane before the king. Read that story of God's deliverance from 1 Samuel 21:10-15.

King Saul was trying to kill David. King Achish wanted to kill David. How could David write such a beautiful psalm of praise such as Psalm 34 during that time in his life? What can we learn from David and his trust in the Lord?

Notes, Thoughts, Questions

Lutheran Service
Book lists the
following Bible verses
that this hymn is
based on: Revelation
7:9-14; Hebrews
9:11-28; John 6:31-
35, 48-51; John
14:18-19. Read
through these Bible
passages and then
read through or sing
the hymn again. How
does the hymn reflect
these Scripture
passages?

The Hymn: Alleluia! Sing to Jesus

LSB 821

Alleluia! Sing to Jesus;
His the scepter, His the throne;
Alleluia! His the triumph,
His the victory alone.
Hark! The songs of peaceful Zion
Thunder like a mighty flood:
"Jesus out of ev'ry nation
Has redeemed us by His blood."

Alleluia! Not as orphans
Are we left in sorrow now;
Alleluia! He is near us;
Faith believes, nor questions how.
Though the cloud from sight received Him
When the forty days were o'er,
Shall our hearts forget His promise:
"I am with you evermore"?

Alleluia! Bread of heaven,
Here on earth our food, our stay;
Alleluia! Here the sinful
Flee to You from day to day.
Intercessor, Friend of sinners,
Earth's Redeemer, hear our plea
Where the songs of all the sinless
Sweep across the crystal sea.

Alleluia! King eternal,
Lord omnipotent we own;
Alleluia! Born of Mary,
Earth Your footstool, heav'n Your throne.
As within the veil You entered,
Robed in flesh, our great High Priest,
Here on earth both priest and victim
In the eucharistic feast.

Alleluia! Sing to Jesus;
His the scepter, His the throne;
Alleluia! His the triumph,
His the victory alone.
Hark! The songs of peaceful Zion
Thunder like a mighty flood:
"Jesus out of ev'ry nation
Has redeemed us by His blood."

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Faith + Life Connections

What do you need to live?
Air. Water. Food. These are the very basic needs of human beings. Jesus calls Himself "Living Water." He calls Himself "the Bread of Life." Why? Because we need Him to live—to live *eternally*. Jesus fills our spiritual hunger for love, peace, and forgiveness.

Elijah, God's great prophet, was alone and afraid. Wicked Queen Jezebel wanted to kill him. Elijah felt hopeless, ready to give up. But God sent an angel to strengthen Elijah with special food. He showed Elijah He would take care of him. This same God cares for you too! *1 Kings 19:1-8*

How do you dress for the day? Take off pajamas. Put on day clothes. How do we "dress" for living as God's children? Get rid of anger, lies, and meanness. Put on kindness and forgiveness—and love, just as Jesus loves us.

Memorize:
Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.
Ephesians 4:32



*Be kind to one another, tenderhearted,
forgiving one another, as God in
Christ forgave you. EPHESIANS 4:32*



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Devote Yourself to Prayer *Colossians 4:2*
Throughout the week, write prayers of praise, thanksgiving, and requests on slips of paper and place them in your prayer bowl. Take turns praying when you gather for devotions.

Walking Together in the Word

August 12–August 17, 2024

This devotional material is based on Bible readings for Sunday, August 18.

Proper 15

The Gospel: John 6:51–69

51 I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats this bread will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.”

52 Then the Jews began to argue sharply among themselves, “How can this man give us his flesh to eat?” 53 Jesus said to them, “Very truly I tell you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. 54 Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise them up at the last day. 55 For my flesh is real food and my blood is real drink. 56 Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in them. 57 Just as the living Father sent me and I live because of the Father, so the one who feeds on me will live because of me. 58 This is the bread that came down from heaven. Your ancestors ate manna and died, but whoever feeds on this bread will live forever.” 59 He said this while teaching in the synagogue in Capernaum. 60 On hearing it, many of his disciples said, “This is a hard teaching. Who can accept it?” 61 Aware that his disciples were grumbling about this, Jesus said to them, “Does this offend you? 62 Then what if you see the Son of Man ascend to where he was before! 63 The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you—they are full of the Spirit and life. 64 Yet there are some of you who do not believe.” For Jesus had known from the beginning which of them did not believe and who would betray him. 65 He went on to say, “This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless the Father has enabled them.”

66 From this time many of his disciples turned back and no longer followed him.

67 “You do not want to leave too, do you?” Jesus asked the Twelve. 68 Simon Peter answered him, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. 69 We have come to believe and to know that you are the Holy One of God.”

Devotion on the Gospel

Over the past three weeks, each of the Gospel readings has been from John 6. If you remember, John 6 began with the story of Jesus feeding the multitude with five loaves of bread and two fish. That physical feeding is the springboard to Jesus’ sermon throughout the rest of the chapter, which focuses on a spiritual feeding. Jesus is the bread of life come down from heaven for the life of the world. Jesus, the bread of life, gives life to the world. Whoever comes to Jesus will never be hungry and whoever believes in Jesus will never be thirsty.

He gives life! And it is eternal life—enduring life—that Jesus offers. He is the bread which always satisfies, which satisfies our souls. He does not leave the hungering soul still hungry! Our soul is satisfied because Jesus gives everlasting life—a far greater miracle than even the feeding of the five thousand!

What good news! Because each of us is mired in the death that our sin brings. Each of us is swept up by doubt, guilt, indifference, disobedience, bitterness, self-righteousness, greed, tears, hate, and finally death itself. Like St. Paul says: The wages of sin is death.

But Jesus brings back to us the gift of God’s renewing life. He is bread for our souls that, without Him, are forever hungering and searching. He is the bread that satisfies. He is the bread that gives eternal life. “He who feeds on me,” Jesus says, “will live because of me. This is the bread that came down from heaven . . . He who feeds on this bread will live forever.”

Notes, Thoughts, Questions

What is the significance of our remaining in Jesus and Jesus’ remaining in us? (see John 15:1–8)

Look at the Alleluia and Verse in Lutheran Service Book p. 156. Sing or speak those words of Peter (taken from John 6:68) together during your devotion time.

Notes, Thoughts, Questions

What sets God apart from the idols of other nations? (see 24:17)

*What challenge does Joshua give to the people? (see 24:15)
How does this relate to us today?*

What basic wisdom distinguishes the wise from the unwise? (see 5:15-17)

Can we apply the words of Paul: "the days are evil" (vs. 16) to today? In what ways?

*Verse to Remember:
Ephesians 5:18-19*

The Old Testament Reading: Joshua 24:1-2a, 14-18

Then Joshua assembled all the tribes of Israel at Shechem. He summoned the elders, leaders, judges and officials of Israel, and they presented themselves before God.

2 Joshua said to all the people, "This is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: 'Long ago your ancestors, including Terah the father of Abraham and Nahor, lived beyond the Euphrates River and worshiped other gods.

14 "Now fear the Lord and serve him with all faithfulness. Throw away the gods your ancestors worshiped beyond the Euphrates River and in Egypt, and serve the Lord. 15 But if serving the Lord seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your ancestors served beyond the Euphrates, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord."

16 Then the people answered, "Far be it from us to forsake the Lord to serve other gods! 17 It was the Lord our God himself who brought us and our parents up out of Egypt, from that land of slavery, and performed those great signs before our eyes. He protected us on our entire journey and among all the nations through which we traveled. 18 And the Lord drove out before us all the nations, including the Amorites, who lived in the land. We too will serve the Lord, because he is our God."

The Epistle: Ephesians 5:6-21

6 Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of such things God's wrath comes on those who are disobedient. 7 Therefore do not be partners with them.

8 For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light 9 (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) 10 and find out what pleases the Lord. 11 Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them. 12 It is shameful even to mention what the disobedient do in secret. 13 But everything exposed by the light becomes visible—and everything that is illuminated becomes a light. 14 This is why it is said:

"Wake up, sleeper,
rise from the dead,
and Christ will shine on you."

15 Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, 16 making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. 17 Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is. 18 Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit, 19 speaking to one another with psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit. Sing and make music from your heart to the Lord, 20 always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

21 Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.

The Psalm: Psalm 34:12-22

Whoever of you loves life

and desires to see many good days,

13 keep your tongue from evil

and your lips from telling lies.

14 Turn from evil and do good;

seek peace and pursue it.

15 The eyes of the Lord are on the righteous,

and his ears are attentive to their cry;

16 but the face of the Lord is against those who do evil,

to blot out their name from the earth.

17 The righteous cry out, and the Lord hears them;

he delivers them from all their troubles.

18 The Lord is close to the brokenhearted

and saves those who are crushed in spirit.

19 The righteous person may have many troubles,

but the Lord delivers him from them all;

20 he protects all his bones,

not one of them will be broken.

21 Evil will slay the wicked;

the foes of the righteous will be condemned.

22 The Lord will rescue his servants;

no one who takes refuge in him will be condemned.

Notes, Thoughts, Questions

David the psalmist expresses how God's "ears are attentive to their cry" and how "the righteous cry out, and the Lord hears them." How does this truth give you peace and comfort?

Read verse 20 again. Read also John 19:31-36. Note how John's Gospel applies the verse of this Psalm to Jesus as the One above all others who could be called a "righteous man."



Notes, Thoughts, Questions

*Read John 14:1-6
and then meditate on
the words of this
hymn. How does the
hymn expound on the
truth of this passage
of Scripture?*

The Hymn: You Are the Way; through You Alone *LSB 526*

You are the way; through You alone
Can we the Father find;
In You, O Christ, has God revealed
His heart and will and mind.

You are the truth; Your Word alone
True wisdom can impart;
You only can inform the mind
And purify the heart.

You are the life; the empty tomb
Proclaims Your conqu'ring arm,
And those who put their trust in You
Not death nor hell shall harm.

You are the way, the truth, the life;
Grant us that way to know,
That truth to keep, that life to win
Whose joys eternal flow.

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Faith + Life Connections

Who do you go to when you need food, or a band-aid, or a hug? Maybe your mom or dad, aunt, or grandpa. Who do we go to for forgiveness and eternal life? Jesus. Jesus is the only one who can give us the gift of eternal life. He is the way, the truth, and the life!

“Whom will you serve?”
Joshua asked the Israelites.
“God, who brought us out of Egypt!” the people replied.
Whom do we serve? God,
who sent Jesus to save us.
What other reasons do we
have to love and serve God?
Joshua 24:1-2a, 14-18

Have you tried to walk in your house at night? It's not easy. You might bump into things or break something. It's much better to walk in the light! “Walk as children of light” the Bible says. How? The Holy Spirit helps us live in goodness and truth, as we praise God.

Memorize:

Be filled with the Spirit,
speaking to one another with
psalms, hymns, and songs
from the Spirit. Sing and make
music from your heart to the
Lord. *Ephesians 5:18-19*



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Devote Yourself to Prayer *Colossians 4:2*

Throughout the week, write prayers of praise, thanksgiving, and requests on slips of paper and place them in your prayer bowl. Take turns praying when you gather for devotions.

Walking Together in the Word

August 19–August 24, 2024

This devotional material is based on Bible readings for Sunday, August 25.

Proper 16

The Gospel: Mark 7:1–13

The Pharisees and some of the teachers of the law who had come from Jerusalem gathered around Jesus 2 and saw some of his disciples eating food with hands that were defiled, that is, unwashed. 3 (The Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they give their hands a ceremonial washing, holding to the tradition of the elders. 4 When they come from the marketplace they do not eat unless they wash. And they observe many other traditions, such as the washing of cups, pitchers and kettles.)

5 So the Pharisees and teachers of the law asked Jesus, “Why don’t your disciples live according to the tradition of the elders instead of eating their food with defiled hands?”

6 He replied, “Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you hypocrites; as it is written: “These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me.

7 They worship me in vain; their teachings are merely human rules.’ 8 You have let go of the commands of God and are holding on to human traditions.” 9 And he continued, “You have a fine way of setting aside the commands of God in order to observe your own traditions! 10 For Moses said, ‘Honor your father and mother,’ and, ‘Anyone who curses their father or mother is to be put to death.’ 11 But you say that if anyone declares that what might have been used to help their father or mother is Corban (that is, devoted to God)— 12 then you no longer let them do anything for their father or mother. 13 Thus you nullify the word of God by your tradition that you have handed down. And you do many things like that.”

Devotion on the Gospel

If there’s one thing for sure, those Pharisees were very religious people. They took their faith very seriously. And to show how serious they were about their religion, they had a rule for just about everything. They had rules about washing their hands, about how far they could walk, about what they could wear, about avoiding certain people, about saying certain prayers. They had hundreds and hundreds of small, little rules that, to be really serious about their religion, must be followed!

And if there’s one thing those Pharisees didn’t like was someone not following the rules! Some of Jesus’ disciples had the audacity to not follow the rules. They were eating with “unclean” hands. And the Pharisees called them on it: Why aren’t Your disciples upholding our traditions? We’ve always done it this way. They’re not following the rules!

Oh, Jesus didn’t have a problem with tradition or following rules. What Jesus couldn’t stand was the Pharisee’s superficial acts of righteousness—just a show, just an act—while their hearts were far from Him.

It’s something we must guard against as well. It’s very easy to “check the box” on the religious to-do list. To hold to those superficial acts of righteousness, all the while our hearts are far from our Lord and Savior.

That’s not true religion. And that’s not what I want for my followers, Jesus says: “Come to me and I will give you rest.” The psalmist cries out: “The Lord is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit.” The Bible proclaims: “The Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us.” Jesus wants to be near, close to our hearts.

Notes, Thoughts, Questions

Why did the Pharisees and teachers of the law come out from Jerusalem to see Jesus?

Jesus quotes Isaiah, condemning those whose “hearts are far from me.” The opposite is to keep our hearts close to Him. How can we go about doing this?

Notes, Thoughts, Questions

Compare verses 11–12 with verses 18–19. What reversals will take place? What would account for such drastic changes? (see verse 14)

Read Matthew 15:8–9. How does Jesus use Isaiah 29:13 to show the hypocrisy of the Pharisees?

What is it that motivates Christians to submit to one another? (See Ephesians 5:21)

Christ loved and gave Himself up for the Church. What does Christ's love motivate husbands to do for their wives? What does Christ's love motivate wives to do for their husbands?

*Verse to Remember:
Ephesians 5:31*

The Old Testament Reading: Isaiah 29:11–19

11 For you this whole vision is nothing but words sealed in a scroll. And if you give the scroll to someone who can read, and say, "Read this, please," they will answer, "I can't; it is sealed." 12 Or if you give the scroll to someone who cannot read, and say, "Read this, please," they will answer, "I don't know how to read."

13 The Lord says: "These people come near to me with their mouth and honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. Their worship of me is based on merely human rules they have been taught."

14 Therefore once more I will astound these people with wonder upon wonder; the wisdom of the wise will perish, the intelligence of the intelligent will vanish." 15 Woe to those who go to great depths to hide their plans from the Lord, who do their work in darkness and think, "Who sees us? Who will know?" 16 You turn things upside down, as if the potter were thought to be like the clay! Shall what is formed say to the one who formed it, "You did not make me"? Can the pot say to the potter, "You know nothing"?

17 In a very short time, will not Lebanon be turned into a fertile field and the fertile field seem like a forest? 18 In that day the deaf will hear the words of the scroll, and out of gloom and darkness the eyes of the blind will see.

19 Once more the humble will rejoice in the Lord; the needy will rejoice in the Holy One of Israel.

The Epistle: Ephesians 5:22–33

22 Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord.

23 For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. 24 Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything.

25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her 26 to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, 27 and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. 28 In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. 29 After all, no one ever hated their own body, but they feed and care for their body, just as Christ does the church— 30 for we are members of his body. 31 "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh." 32 This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church. 33 However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.

The Psalm: Psalm 14

The fool says in his heart,

"There is no God."

They are corrupt, their deeds are vile;
there is no one who does good.

2 The Lord looks down from heaven
on all mankind

to see if there are any who understand,
any who seek God.

3 All have turned away, all have become corrupt;
there is no one who does good,
not even one.

4 Do all these evildoers know nothing
They devour my people as though eating bread;
they never call on the Lord.

5 But there they are, overwhelmed with dread,
for God is present in the company of the righteous.

6 You evildoers frustrate the plans of the poor,
but the Lord is their refuge.

7 Oh, that salvation for Israel would come out of Zion!
When the Lord restores his people,
let Jacob rejoice and Israel be glad!

Notes, Thoughts, Questions

How does the psalmist describe "the fool" and "evildoers?"

Read Romans 3:9-12. How does Paul use and interpret the words of Psalm 14?



Notes, Thoughts, Questions

This hymn of Martin Luther is not so much about escape from troubles. It is rather a cry for faithful endurance in the midst of troubles.

What difference does this make for us in living as Christians? Where, then, does our hope lie in the midst of troubles?

The Hymn: Lord, Keep Us Steadfast in Your Word *LSB 655*

Lord, keep us steadfast in Your Word;
Curb those who by deceit or sword
Would wrest the kingdom from Your Son
And bring to naught all He has done.

Lord Jesus Christ, Your pow'r make known,
For You are Lord of lords alone;
Defend Your holy Church that we
May sing Your praise eternally.

O Comforter of priceless worth,
Send peace and unity on earth;
Support us in our final strife
And lead us out of death to life.

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Faith + Life Connections

Have you ever played a game where someone made up rules that everyone had to follow? They didn't really care about the game. They just want everyone to follow their rules! That's what the Pharisees were doing. They didn't really care about following God or loving others. Jesus tells us what is most important: loving God and others with our whole

Some people say, "If you follow this rule and do this thing, you will go to heaven." But that's not what God says. Doing good things doesn't give us eternal life. Forgiveness and eternal life are a gift from God. Jesus earned it for us!

How should we love one another? God gives us a picture: He tells us to look at how Jesus loves the Church, believers in Him. Jesus gave up His life for us. He cares for us. How can you show love to others? *Ephesians 5:22-33*

Memorize:

For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh. *Ephesians 5:31*



So that HE might
Present the church
to himself in splendor
that she might be

holy EPH
5:27

Kathleen

ONOURISHED + CLEANSSES + WASHES + PRESENTED IN SPLENDOR + PROFOUND MYSTERY + MARRIAGE + LOVED



OBLESSED THROUGH ORDER + CHERISHED + LOVED + SANCTIFIED + MADE ONE + RESPECT + HOLY + BRIDE OF CHRIST

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Devote Yourselves to Prayer *Colossians 4:2*

Throughout the week, write prayers of praise, thanksgiving, and requests on slips of paper and place them in your prayer bowl. Take turns praying when you gather for devotions.

Walking Together in the Word

August 26–August 31, 2024

This devotional material is based on Bible readings for Sunday, September 1.

Proper 17

The Gospel: Mark 7:14–23

14 Again Jesus called the crowd to him and said, “Listen to me, everyone, and understand this. 15 Nothing outside a person can defile them by going into them. Rather, it is what comes out of a person that defiles them.” [16]

17 After he had left the crowd and entered the house, his disciples asked him about this parable. 18 “Are you so dull?” he asked. “Don’t you see that nothing that enters a person from the outside can defile them? 19 For it doesn’t go into their heart but into their stomach, and then out of the body.” (In saying this, Jesus declared all foods clean.)

20 He went on: “What comes out of a person is what defiles them. 21 For it is from within, out of a person’s heart, that evil thoughts come—sexual immorality, theft, murder, 22 adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly. 23 All these evils come from inside and defile a person.”

Devotion on the Gospel

Those Pharisees thought that they could make themselves squeaky clean before God by what they did and by what they didn’t do. Remember the hundreds of laws that they came up with? All so they could stand clean before God, because of what they had done, by their outward actions and appearances, by what they ate and what they didn’t eat.

But Jesus says: “Nothing outside a man can make him ‘unclean’ by going into him. Rather, it is what comes out of a man that makes him ‘unclean.’” Jesus later, in the house, told to His disciples that the real heart of the matter is a “heart issue!” “For from within, out of men’s hearts, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly.”

If we would each take a good look in the mirror and search our own thoughts, words, and actions, it quickly becomes evident that we each need to humbly bow before our God in repentance, asking His forgiveness. Our hearts are not clean!

And the beautiful thing is that in Christ Jesus, we fully and freely receive His mercy, forgiveness, and grace. He gives it to us because of His death and resurrection. He gives it to us because of His great love for us. He gives it to us so we might have eternal life. Thanks be to God, Christ makes us clean - inside and out!

Notes, Thoughts, Questions

What, according to Jesus, is the real source of defilement in people’s lives?

Jesus cites a long list of sins that come from within, from our sinful hearts, that make us unclean. What do you notice about the kinds of sins that Jesus listed?

Notes, Thoughts, Questions

Our human laws change constantly. God's laws do not change. Because of this, what three things are we instructed to do? (see 4:2)

What were the two gifts of God that God's people enjoyed which no other nation could claim? (4:7-8)

Paul uses the illustration of a soldier's armor to describe several gifts of God that He provides to protect us from evil. What six things does he list?

Verse to Remember: Ephesians 6:18

Note how there is just one offensive weapon that we are given: the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God. In placing this last, as the culmination of the Christian's armor, how does Paul point us to a basic, ongoing need in our Christian lives?

The Old Testament Reading: Deuteronomy 4:1-2, 6-9

Now, Israel, hear the decrees and laws I am about to teach you. Follow them so that you may live and may go in and take possession of the land the Lord, the God of your ancestors, is giving you. 2 Do not add to what I command you and do not subtract from it, but keep the commands of the Lord your God that I give you.

6 Observe them carefully, for this will show your wisdom and understanding to the nations, who will hear about all these decrees and say, "Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people." 7 What other nation is so great as to have their gods near them the way the Lord our God is near us whenever we pray to him? 8 And what other nation is so great as to have such righteous decrees and laws as this body of laws I am setting before you today?

9 Only be careful, and watch yourselves closely so that you do not forget the things your eyes have seen or let them fade from your heart as long as you live. Teach them to your children and to their children after them.

The Epistle: Ephesians 6:10-20

10 Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. 11 Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes.

12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. 13 Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. 14 Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, 15 and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. 16 In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. 17 Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

18 And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people. 19 Pray also for me, that whenever I speak, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel, 20 for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should.

The Psalm: Psalm 119:129-136

Your statutes are wonderful;
therefore I obey them.

130 The unfolding of your words gives light;
it gives understanding to the simple.

131 I open my mouth and pant,
longing for your commands.

132 Turn to me and have mercy on me,
as you always do to those who love your name.

133 Direct my footsteps according to your word;
let no sin rule over me.

134 Redeem me from human oppression,
that I may obey your precepts.

135 Make your face shine on your servant
and teach me your decrees.

136 Streams of tears flow from my eyes,
for your law is not obeyed.

Notes, Thoughts, Questions

Psalm 119 is the longest psalm in the Bible (176 verses!). The focus of this psalm is devotion to the Word of God. Throughout this week, take time to read and meditate on all of Psalm 119.

Throughout this psalm, the psalmist is praying and appealing to God. What does the psalmist pray for in these verses? Can and should this also be our prayer?



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Notes, Thoughts, Questions

This hymn is a prayer for strength and guidance in the daily living of the Christian life. How does this hymn and prayer comfort or encourage you?

The Hymn: O God, My Faithful God *LSB 696*

O God, my faithful God,
True fountain ever flowing,
Without whom nothing is,
All perfect gifts bestowing:
Give me a healthy frame,
And may I have within
A conscience free from blame,
A soul unstained by sin.

Grant me the strength to do
With ready heart and willing
Whatever You command,
My calling here fulfilling;
That I do what I should
While trusting You to bless
The outcome for my good,
For You must give success.

Keep me from saying words
That later need recalling;
Guard me lest idle speech
May from my lips be falling;
But when within my place
I must and ought to speak,
Then to my words give grace
Lest I offend the weak.

Lord, let me win my foes
With kindly words and actions,
And let me find good friends
For counsel and correction.
Help me, as You have taught,
To love both great and small
And by Your Spirit's might
To live in peace with all.

Let me depart this life
Confiding in my Savior;
By grace receive my soul
That it may live forever;
And let my body have
A quiet resting place
Within a Christian grave;
And let it sleep in peace.

And on that final day
When all the dead are
waking,
Stretch out Your mighty hand,
My deathly slumber breaking.
Then let me hear Your voice,
Redeem this earthly frame,
And bid me to rejoice
With those who love Your
name.

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Faith + Life Connections

After a long day of playing outside, you can come in and take a bath to wash off all the dirt and grime. You're clean! But what do we do about the things that make us unclean on the inside? Lies, anger, meanness—how do we wash these away? We don't—Jesus does! Jesus forgives our sins and makes our hearts clean.

Mark 7:14-23

How do people know that we are Christians? Hopefully, they see our kind actions and they hear our loving words that tell about Jesus. When we follow God's commands, we are witnesses of God's love!

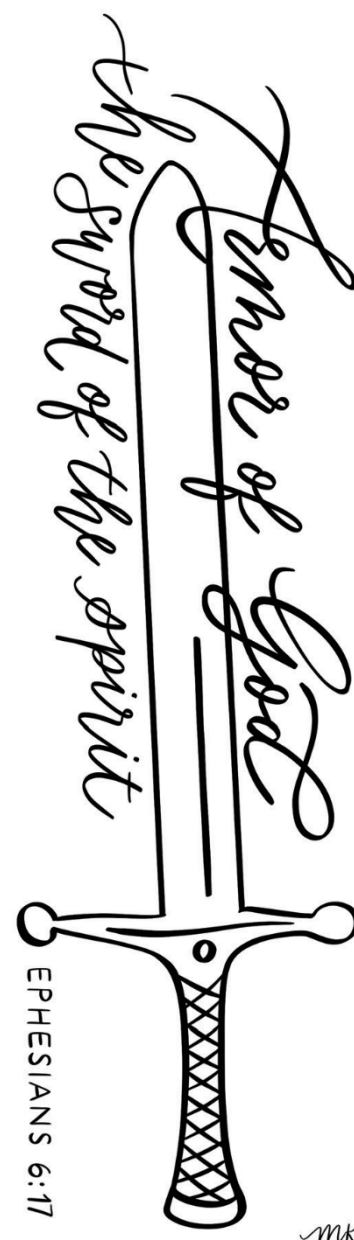
The devil wants us to sin and to turn against God. God gives us spiritual "armor" to stand up against him, to defend us against evil. Look again at Ephesians 6:14-17. Name the ways God defends us from evil. *Ephesians 6:10-*

Memorize:

And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people.
Ephesians 6:18

PRAY
FOR ME:
that words
may be
given to
me to
BOLDLY
proclaim
the mystery
of the

GOSPEL
ephesians 6



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Devote Yourself to Prayer *Colossians 4:2*
Throughout the week, write prayers of praise, thanksgiving, and requests on slips of paper and place them in your prayer bowl. Take turns praying when you gather for devotions.

