

Walking Together in the Word

Devotions on the Weekly Scripture Readings for March 2023 (Year A)

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

February 27–March 4, 2023

This devotional material is based on Bible readings for Sunday, March 5.

Lent 2

The Gospel: John 3:1-17

Now there was a Pharisee, a man named Nicodemus who was a member of the Jewish ruling council. 2 He came to Jesus at night and said, “Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the signs you are doing if God were not with him.” 3 Jesus replied, “Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again.” 4 “How can someone be born when they are old?” Nicodemus asked. “Surely they cannot enter a second time into their mother’s womb to be born!” 5 Jesus answered, “Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit. 6 Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. 7 You should not be surprised at my saying, ‘You must be born again.’ 8 The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit.” 9 “How can this be?” Nicodemus asked. 10 “You are Israel’s teacher,” said Jesus, “and do you not understand these things? 11 Very truly I tell you, we speak of what we know, and we testify to what we have seen, but still you people do not accept our testimony. 12 I have spoken to you of earthly things and you do not believe; how then will you believe if I speak of heavenly things? 13 No one has ever gone into heaven except the one who came from heaven—the Son of Man. 14 Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, 15 that everyone who believes may have eternal life in him.” 16 For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. 17 For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.

Devotion on the Gospel

A little time alone with Jesus changed Nicodemus forever. Nicodemus was curious about Jesus, interested in what He had to say, and had some questions that only Jesus could answer. But Nicodemus was a Pharisee! Pharisees couldn’t just go talk to Jesus. So Nicodemus sneaks over at night to talk to Jesus alone. And as Jesus is speaking, the Spirit is working. And Jesus shares with Nicodemus the beauty that is the Gospel: “For God so loved the world...”

A little time alone with Jesus changed Nicodemus forever. Remember, it was Nicodemus and his friend Joseph who lovingly took Jesus’ dead body down from the cross and buried Him in the tomb. A little time with Jesus changed Nicodemus’s life forever.

What is wonderful is that we can see Nicodemus’s story reflected in our own story. A little time with Jesus can change a life forever. Yours too, right? The Holy Spirit came to you through Holy Baptism—that moment when Jesus changed you forever. And the voice of the Savior spoke: You are my child. And all the gifts of the cross—the love, the forgiveness, the mercy, the grace—all of it I give to you.

Just a little time with Jesus and people are changed. Just a little time at the communion rail, just a little time in the Word, just a little time in worship, just a little time in Bible class. Just a little time with Him, and we are changed forever.

Notes, Thoughts, Questions

There is so much to meditate on in these verses! Baptism; spiritual renewal; new life; the connection between Numbers 21:4-9 and the reference to Jesus’ death on the cross; the “Gospel in a nutshell.”

Read through this passage several times, each time focusing on a different aspect of Jesus’ love for you.

How has Jesus changed your life?

Notes, Thoughts, Questions

What are the promises that God gave to Abram in these verses? Which of these promises is for you as well?

We can't be saved by obeying the law. We are saved by faith in the promise—the promise (and fulfillment) of a Savior.

What other verses talk about the righteousness we receive by faith alone? See Ephesians 2:8-9 and John 6:40.

The Old Testament Reading: Genesis 12:1-9

The Call of Abram

12 The Lord had said to Abram, “Go from your country, your people and your father’s household to the land I will show you.

2 “I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. 3 I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.” 4 So Abram went, as the Lord had told him; and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he set out from Harran. 5 He took his wife Sarai, his nephew Lot, all the possessions they had accumulated and the people they had acquired in Harran, and they set out for the land of Canaan, and they arrived there.

6 Abram traveled through the land as far as the site of the great tree of Moreh at Shechem. At that time the Canaanites were in the land. 7 The Lord appeared to Abram and said, “To your offspring I will give this land.” So he built an altar there to the Lord, who had appeared to him.

8 From there he went on toward the hills east of Bethel and pitched his tent, with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east. There he built an altar to the Lord and called on the name of the Lord. 9 Then Abram set out and continued toward the Negev.

The Epistle: Romans 4:1-8, 13-17

What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh, discovered in this matter? 2 If, in fact, Abraham was justified by works, he had something to boast about—but not before God. 3 What does Scripture say? “Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness.” 4 Now to the one who works, wages are not credited as a gift but as an obligation. 5 However, to the one who does not work but trusts God who justifies the ungodly, their faith is credited as righteousness. 6 David says the same thing when he speaks of the blessedness of the one to whom God credits righteousness apart from works: 7 “Blessed are those whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. 8 Blessed is the one whose sin the Lord will never count against them.”

13 It was not through the law that Abraham and his offspring received the promise that he would be heir of the world, but through the righteousness that comes by faith. 14 For if those who depend on the law are heirs, faith means nothing and the promise is worthless, 15 because the law brings wrath. And where there is no law there is no transgression.

16 Therefore, the promise comes by faith, so that it may be by grace and may be guaranteed to all Abraham’s offspring—not only to those who are of the law but also to those who have the faith of Abraham. He is the father of us all. 17 As it is written: “I have made you a father of many nations.” He is our father in the sight of God, in whom he believed—the God who gives life to the dead and calls into being things that were not.

The Psalm: Psalm 121

1 I lift up my eyes to the mountains—
where does my help come from?

2 My help comes from the Lord,
the Maker of heaven and earth.

3 He will not let your foot slip—
he who watches over you will not slumber;

4 indeed, he who watches over Israel
will neither slumber nor sleep.

5 The Lord watches over you—
the Lord is your shade at your right hand;

6 the sun will not harm you by day,
nor the moon by night.

7 The Lord will keep you from all harm—
he will watch over your life;

8 the Lord will watch over your coming and going
both now and forevermore.

Notes, Thoughts, Questions

*Verse to Remember:
Psalm 121:1-2*

1 I lift up my eyes to the mountains—

where does my help come from?

My help comes from the Lord,

the Maker of heaven and earth.

*Notes,
Thoughts,
Questions*

Underline the verses that talk about what God has done for you. It's almost all of them, isn't it? Say a prayer of thanks for all that God has done, and continues to do for you, His beloved child.

The Hymn: God Loved the World So That He Gave *LSB 571*

God loved the world so that He gave
His only Son the lost to save,
That all who would in Him believe
Should everlasting life receive.

Christ Jesus is the ground of faith,
Who was made flesh and suffered death;
All then who trust in Him alone
Are built on this chief cornerstone.

God would not have the sinner die;
His Son with saving grace is nigh;
His Spirit in the Word declares
How we in Christ are heaven's heirs.

Be of good cheer, for God's own Son
Forgives all sins which you have done;
And, justified by Jesus' blood,
Your Baptism grants the highest good.

If you are sick, if death is near,
This truth your troubled heart can cheer:
Christ Jesus saves your soul from death;
That is the firmest ground of faith.

Glory to God the Father, Son,
And Holy Spirit, Three in One!
To You, O blessed Trinity,
Be praise now and eternally!

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God loved
the world
so that
He gave
His
only Son

Faith + Life Connections

It is one of the most well-known and loved verses of the Bible: John 3:16. This verse simply and clearly tells about God's love for us in Jesus. Write this verse on several red paper hearts. Then put them where people can find them—at the library, the grocery store, the gym. Share the love of Jesus!

John 3:1-17

What was the last promise that you made to someone? Do you keep every promise that you make? We don't always keep our promises, but God does! He promised Abram that all nations would be blessed through him—God kept His promise in Jesus!

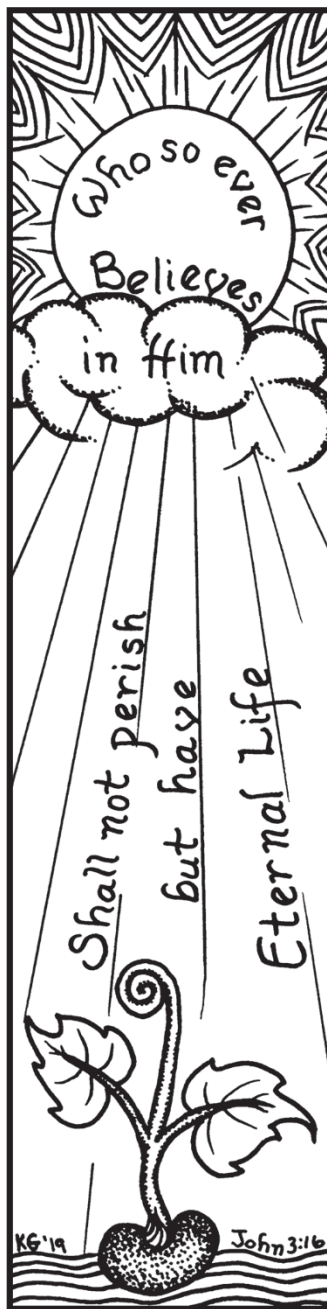
Genesis 12:1-9

Psalms 121 is a beautiful psalm of comfort. Use paper and art supplies or your computer to make a poster of this psalm. Display it and read it each day, thanking God for His love and care for you.

Psalms 121

Memorize:

"I lift up my eyes to the mountains— where does my help come from? My help comes from the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth."
Psalm 121:1-2



Coloring pages from visualfaithmin.org

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

March 6–March 11, 2023

This devotional material is based on Bible readings for Sunday, March 12.

Lent 3

The Gospel: John 4:5–26

The Samaritan Woman

So he came to a town in Samaria called Sychar, near the plot of ground Jacob had given to his son Joseph. 6 Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired as he was from the journey, sat down by the well. It was about noon.

7 When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, "Will you give me a drink?" 8 (His disciples had gone into the town to buy food.)

9 The Samaritan woman said to him, "You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?" (For Jews do not associate with Samaritans.)

10 Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water."

11 "Sir," the woman said, "you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water? 12 Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did also his sons and his livestock?"

13 Jesus answered, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, 14 but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life."

15 The woman said to him, "Sir, give me this water so that I won't get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water."

16 He told her, "Go, call your husband and come back."

17 "I have no husband," she replied.

Jesus said to her, "You are right when you say you have no husband. 18 The fact is, you have had five husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband. What you have just said is quite true."

19 "Sir," the woman said, "I can see that you are a prophet. 20 Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem."

21 "Woman," Jesus replied, "believe me, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. 22 You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews. 23 Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. 24 God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth."

25 The woman said, "I know that Messiah" (called Christ) "is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us."

26 Then Jesus declared, "I, the one speaking to you—I am he."

Notes, Thoughts, Questions

What do these verses say about Jesus' love and compassion for all people?

Notes, Thoughts, Questions

Highlight all the ways that Jesus offers to us His "living water."

How often do we receive the living water that Christ so freely offers?

Again and again God tested His people to see if they would trust in Him to give them what they needed. Again and again they failed the test. But God had mercy on them, faithfully giving them all that they needed to live.

Do we sometime fail to trust in God for all we need? God wants us to always look to Him. He will give us what we need for this life and the spiritual water that leads to eternal life.

Devotion on the Gospel

"Give me a drink," Jesus says. But Jews don't talk to Samaritans. And men don't talk to strange women. But here at the well, Jesus has something to give this woman, even as He begins by asking her for a drink.

What He has to give her is water. Not the water from the depths of Jacob's well, but a different kind of water: "Living" water.

Living water is all the gifts He gives that quench spiritual thirst. Living water is the water that gives true spiritual life. Living water, really, is Jesus Christ Himself!

He gives that living water in the waters of Baptism. He gives living water in the bread and wine of His Supper. He gives living water in worship and Bible study and Sunday school and devotions through the sharing of His Word.

The Samaritan woman exclaims, "Give me this living water!" She didn't understand. She thought He was talking about physical water. But we who know Jesus know better. We know that the water that Jesus offers to us is the water of life—water, in fact, that "becomes a spring of water welling up to eternal life!"

It's that water we yearn for. It's that water we thirst for. It's for that water that we cry out: "Give me this living water!"

The Old Testament Reading: Exodus 17:1-7

Water From the Rock

17 The whole Israelite community set out from the Desert of Sin, traveling from place to place as the Lord commanded. They camped at Rephidim, but there was no water for the people to drink. 2 So they quarreled with Moses and said, "Give us water to drink."

Moses replied, "Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you put the Lord to the test?"

3 But the people were thirsty for water there, and they grumbled against Moses. They said, "Why did you bring us up out of Egypt to make us and our children and livestock die of thirst?"

4 Then Moses cried out to the Lord, "What am I to do with these people? They are almost ready to stone me."

5 The Lord answered Moses, "Go out in front of the people. Take with you some of the elders of Israel and take in your hand the staff with which you struck the Nile, and go. 6 I will stand there before you by the rock at Horeb. Strike the rock, and water will come out of it for the people to drink." So Moses did this in the sight of the elders of Israel. 7 And he called the place Massah and Meribah because the Israelites quarreled and because they tested the Lord saying, "Is the Lord among us or not?"

The Epistle: Romans 5:1-8

Peace and Hope

5 Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, 2 through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we boast in the hope of the glory of God. 3 Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; 4 perseverance, character; and character, hope. 5 And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.

6 You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. 7 Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous person, though for a good person someone might possibly dare to die. 8 But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

The Psalm: Psalm 95:1-9

Come, let us sing for joy to the Lord;
let us shout aloud to the Rock of our salvation.

2 Let us come before him with thanksgiving
and extol him with music and song.

3 For the Lord is the great God,
the great King above all gods.

4 In his hand are the depths of the earth,
and the mountain peaks belong to him.

5 The sea is his, for he made it,
and his hands formed the dry land.

6 Come, let us bow down in worship,
let us kneel before the Lord our Maker;

7 for he is our God
and we are the people of his pasture,
the flock under his care.

Today, if only you would hear his voice,

8 "Do not harden your hearts as you did at Meribah,
as you did that day at Massah in the wilderness,

9 where your ancestors tested me;
they tried me, though they had seen what I did.

Notes, Thoughts, Questions

Verse to Remember:
Romans 5:8

*This is a joyful psalm
of thanks and praise
to God our Father.
Read it out loud
together!*

**Notes,
Thoughts,
Questions**

Jesus gives us rest as we travel through this weary life. He revives us and quenches our spiritual thirst. What else does Jesus offer to us?

The Hymn: I Heard the Voice of Jesus Say

LSB 699

I heard the voice of Jesus say,
“Come unto Me and rest;
Lay down, thou weary one, lay down
Thy head upon My breast.”

I came to Jesus as I was,
So weary, worn, and sad;
I found in Him a resting place,
And He has made me glad.

I heard the voice of Jesus say,
“Behold, I freely give
The living water; thirsty one,
Stoop down and drink and live.”
I came to Jesus, and I drank
Of that life-giving stream;
My thirst was quenched, my soul revived,
And now I live in Him.

I heard the voice of Jesus say,
“I am this dark world’s light.
Look unto Me; thy morn shall rise
And all thy day be bright.”
I looked to Jesus, and I found
In Him my star, my sun;
And in that light of life I’ll walk
Till trav’ling days are done.

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Come
unto
Me
and
rest

Faith + Life Connections

Did you know that up to 60% of the human body is water? Or that a person can survive only about 3 days without water? Water is essential for life! Even more important is the living water that Jesus gives us. Faith in Jesus as our Savior gives us new life here on earth, and eternal life with Him in heaven.

Jhn 4:5-26

Have you ever heard a story about someone who gave his or her life for another person? It's incredible to hear those stories, isn't it? Share a story you've heard or look for one online to share. Even more incredible is the fact that Jesus gave His life for us sinners—the whole world.

Romans 5:1-8

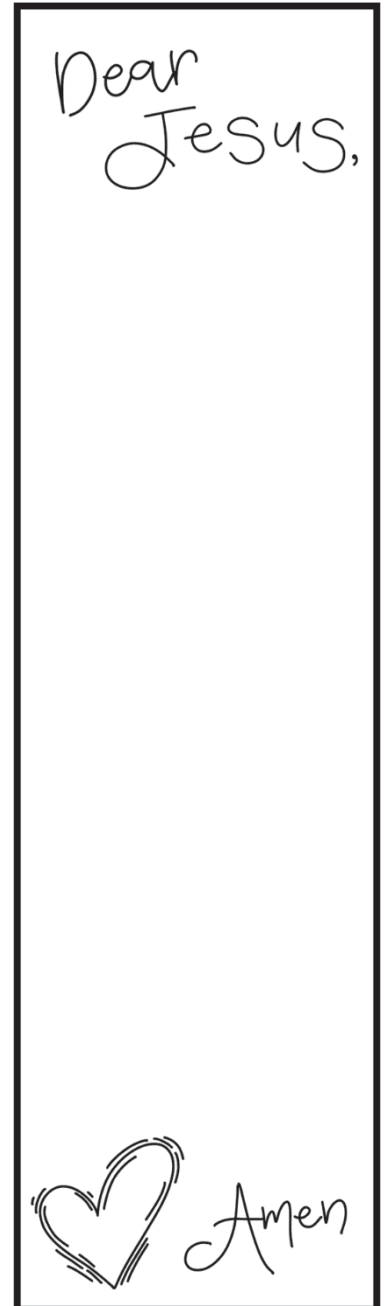
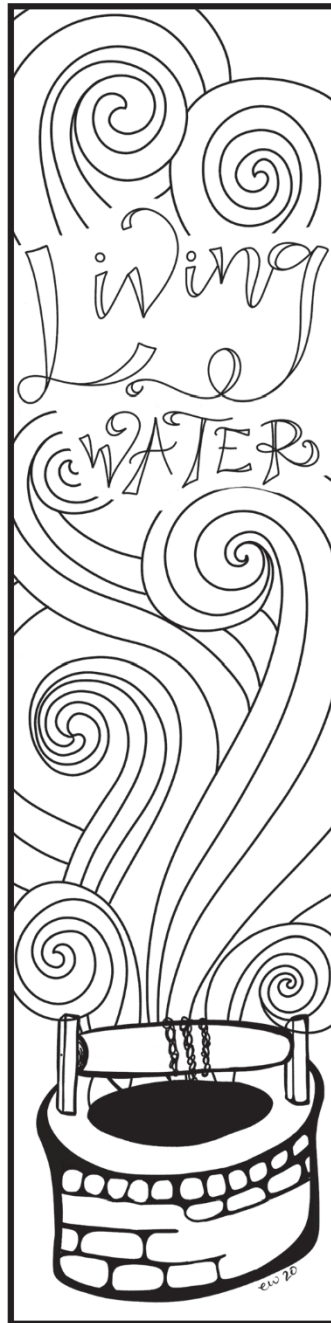
Part of this psalm is sung in the service of Matins. Look online for "Venite Matins LSB" to find a recording of these verses set to music.

Psalm 95:1-9

Memorize:

But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Romans 5:8



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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

March 13–March 18, 2023

This devotional material is based on Bible readings for Sunday, March 19.

Lent 4

The Gospel: John 9:1–7, 13–17, 34–39

As he went along, he saw a man blind from birth. 2 His disciples asked him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?”

3 “Neither this man nor his parents sinned,” said Jesus, “but this happened so that the works of God might be displayed in him. 4 As long as it is day, we must do the works of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work. 5 While I am in the world, I am the light of the world.”

6 After saying this, he spit on the ground, made some mud with the saliva, and put it on the man’s eyes. 7 “Go,” he told him, “wash in the Pool of Siloam” (this word means “Sent”). So the man went and washed, and came home seeing.

13 They brought to the Pharisees the man who had been blind. 14 Now the day on which Jesus had made the mud and opened the man’s eyes was a Sabbath. 15 Therefore the Pharisees also asked him how he had received his sight. “He put mud on my eyes,” the man replied, “and I washed, and now I see.”

16 Some of the Pharisees said, “This man is not from God, for he does not keep the Sabbath.” But others asked, “How can a sinner perform such signs?” So they were divided. 17 Then they turned again to the blind man, “What have you to say about him? It was your eyes he opened.” The man replied, “He is a prophet.”

34 To this they replied, “You were steeped in sin at birth; how dare you lecture us!” And they threw him out. 35 Jesus heard that they had thrown him out, and when he found him, he said, “Do you believe in the Son of Man?” 36 “Who is he, sir?” the man asked. “Tell me so that I may believe in him.” 37 Jesus said, “You have now seen him; in fact, he is the one speaking with you.” 38 Then the man said, “Lord, I believe,” and he worshiped him. 39 Jesus said, “For judgment I have come into this world, so that the blind will see and those who see will become blind.”

Devotion on the Gospel

One day, Jesus and His disciples came upon a blind man. And the disciples ask the question, “Rabbi, who sinned? This blind man or his parents?” In Jesus’ day, it was thought that if you had a disability like blindness, then somebody must have done something really bad for God to afflict you in that way. How wrong they were!

Yes, the man sinned. Everyone is a sinner. But that wasn’t why he was blind. Jesus says it was so that the work of God might be displayed in his life. And then Jesus restores his sight and says, “I am the light of the world!”

Jesus, the light of the world, opened the man’s eyes. And He opens our eyes too! He shines into our dark world of sin. He shows us that we have a God of life, a God of compassion, a God of love. He shows us the cross and we see sins paid for and forgiven. He shows us the empty tomb and we see death swallowed up in victory. He shows us heaven and a place prepared for us.

Jesus shines His light into our lives to change the way we think, the way we speak, the way we live. Jesus shines His light into our lives so the work of God is displayed in us. Jesus shines His light into our lives so that we would believe and confess that He is the light of the world.

Notes, Thoughts, Questions

How did Jesus heal both the physical and spiritual blindness of the man?

How is the work of God displayed in your life?

Notes, Thoughts, Questions

Nothing can stop God from keeping His promise to bring the light of forgiveness and life through the Messiah. Some will choose to remain blind. But for those who receive the Gospel, God will lead them out of darkness and into light and salvation.

*Verse to Remember:
Ephesians 5:8*

The Old Testament Reading: Isaiah 42:14-21

“For a long time I have kept silent,
I have been quiet and held myself back.
But now, like a woman in childbirth,
I cry out, I gasp and pant.
15 I will lay waste the mountains and hills
and dry up all their vegetation;
I will turn rivers into islands
and dry up the pools.
16 I will lead the blind by ways they have not known,
along unfamiliar paths I will guide them;
I will turn the darkness into light before them
and make the rough places smooth.
These are the things I will do;
I will not forsake them.
17 But those who trust in idols,
who say to images, ‘You are our gods,’
will be turned back in utter shame.
18 “Hear, you deaf;
look, you blind, and see!
19 Who is blind but my servant,
and deaf like the messenger I send?
Who is blind like the one in covenant with me,
blind like the servant of the Lord?
20 You have seen many things, but you pay no attention;
your ears are open, but you do not listen.”
21 It pleased the Lord
for the sake of his righteousness
to make his law great and glorious.

The Epistle: Ephesians 5:8-14

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.”

The Psalm: Psalm 142

I cry aloud to the Lord;
I lift up my voice to the Lord for mercy.
2 I pour out before him my complaint;
before him I tell my trouble.
3 When my spirit grows faint within me,
it is you who watch over my way.
In the path where I walk
people have hidden a snare for me.
4 Look and see, there is no one at my right hand;
no one is concerned for me.
I have no refuge;
no one cares for my life.
5 I cry to you, Lord;
I say, "You are my refuge,
my portion in the land of the living."
6 Listen to my cry,
for I am in desperate need;
rescue me from those who pursue me,
for they are too strong for me.
7 Set me free from my prison,
that I may praise your name.
Then the righteous will gather about me
because of your goodness to me.

I cry to you, Lord;
I say, "You are my refuge,
my portion in the land of the
living."

Notes, Thoughts, Questions

David wrote this psalm as he hid in a cave from King Saul. See 1 Samuel 22:1-2. When David was afraid and in distress, to Whom did he turn?

God wants us to cry out to Him when we are troubled. He will hear you. He loves you.

**Notes,
Thoughts,
Questions**

This hymn is loved by many. Read through the words slowly. Which words bring you special joy, comfort, or peace?

The Hymn: Amazing Grace *LSB 744*

Amazing grace—how sweet the sound—
That saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost but now am found,
Was blind but now I see!

The Lord has promised good to me,
His Word my hope secures;
He will my shield and portion be
As long as life endures.

Through many dangers, toils, and snares
I have already come;
His grace has brought me safe thus far,
His grace will lead me home.

Yes, when this flesh and heart shall fail
And mortal life shall cease,
Amazing grace shall then prevail
In heaven's joy and peace.

When we've been there ten thousand years,
Bright shining as the sun,
We've no less days to sing God's praise
Than when we'd first begun.

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Amazing

grace

how

sweet

the

sound

Faith + Life Connections

Put on a blindfold and try to do a simple task such as washing the dishes or folding clothes. Take off the blindfold and try again. What a difference! Think how incredible it must have been for the man born blind to finally see. Then think how even more incredible it is to be healed of spiritual blindness—to come to know Jesus as your Savior!

John 9:1-7, 13-17, 34-39

How can you walk as a child of the light? Look online for the words to the hymn, “I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light” LSB 411. Listen to or read the words; then reread the Bible text.

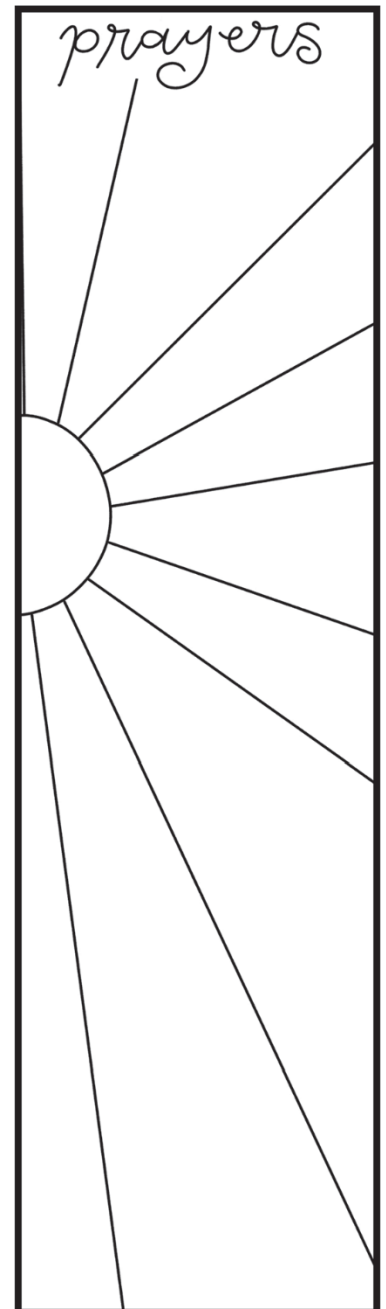
Ephesians 5:8-14

Is it ok to cry to God and tell Him when we are afraid, or angry, or exhausted? Yes! As we read the psalms, we see David pouring out his emotions to God. Why? God promises to hear, to listen, to love, to help. Cry out to Him!

Psalms 142

Memorize:

“For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light.”
Ephesians 5:8



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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

March 20–March 25, 2023

This devotional material is based on Bible readings for Sunday, March 26.

Lent 5

The Gospel: John 11:17–27, 38–53

On his arrival, Jesus found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days. 18 Now Bethany was less than two miles from Jerusalem, 19 and many Jews had come to Martha and Mary to comfort them in the loss of their brother. 20 When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went out to meet him, but Mary stayed at home.

21 “Lord,” Martha said to Jesus, “if you had been here, my brother would not have died. 22 But I know that even now God will give you whatever you ask.”

23 Jesus said to her, “Your brother will rise again.”

24 Martha answered, “I know he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day.”

25 Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; 26 and whoever lives by believing in me will never die.

Do you believe this?”

27 “Yes, Lord,” she replied, “I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, who is to come into the world.”

38 Jesus, once more deeply moved, came to the tomb. It was a cave with a stone laid across the entrance. 39 “Take away the stone,” he said.

“But, Lord,” said Martha, the sister of the dead man, “by this time there is a bad odor, for he has been there four days.”

40 Then Jesus said, “Did I not tell you that if you believe, you will see the glory of God?”

41 So they took away the stone. Then Jesus looked up and said, “Father, I thank you that you have heard me. 42 I knew that you always hear me, but I said this for the benefit of the people standing here, that they may believe that you sent me.”

43 When he had said this, Jesus called in a loud voice, “Lazarus, come out!” 44 The dead man came out, his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen, and a cloth around his face.

Jesus said to them, “Take off the grave clothes and let him go.”

45 Therefore many of the Jews who had come to visit Mary, and had seen what Jesus did, believed in him. 46 But some of them went to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done. 47 Then the chief priests and the Pharisees called a meeting of the Sanhedrin.

“What are we accomplishing?” they asked. “Here is this man performing many signs.

48 If we let him go on like this, everyone will believe in him, and then the Romans will come and take away both our temple and our nation.”

49 Then one of them, named Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, spoke up, “You know nothing at all! 50 You do not realize that it is better for you that one man die for the people than that the whole nation perish.”

51 He did not say this on his own, but as high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus would die for the Jewish nation, 52 and not only for that nation but also for the scattered children of God, to bring them together and make them one. 53 So from that day on they plotted to take his life.

Notes, Thoughts, Questions

Verse to Remember:
John 11:25-26

Notes, Thoughts, Questions

1 Corinthians
chapter 15 is about
the resurrection of
the dead—Christ's
resurrection and our
future resurrection.
Death does not have
the last word.

"Where, O death, is
your victory? Where,
O death, is your
sting?...
thanks be to God! He
gives us the victory
through our Lord
Jesus Christ"
(1 Cor. 15:55-56).

*When we feel that
there is no hope, we
look to our God. He
fills us with His
Spirit. He promises
to one day bring us
to the Promised
Land of heaven to
be with Him forever.*

Devotion on the Gospel

Most of us have been there. Standing near the grave of a loved one. The hole of emptiness in the pit of our soul. The anger that something like this could happen. The grief that just pours over us and causes those tears to fall. Jesus has been there too. Death had touched His life. Lazarus had died and His heart was broken.

But that mourning and those tears is not where this story ends. Death and the grave are not the last word. They are never the last word! Because death and the grave are no match for Jesus. "I am the resurrection and the life," He said. "He who believes in Me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in Me will never die." And then Jesus cries out, "Lazarus, come out!" And death is broken as Lazarus emerges from the tomb, alive.

He has broken death for us too! When He died on the cross and then rose from the grave on Easter Sunday, He broke death. He conquered death. And so he who believes in Jesus will live, even though He dies. Whoever lives and believes in Jesus will never die!

Death and the grave are not the last word. They are never the last word! Because death and the grave are no match for Jesus. He is the resurrection and the life!

The Old Testament Reading: Ezekiel 37:1-14

The hand of the Lord was on me, and he brought me out by the Spirit of the Lord and set me in the middle of a valley; it was full of bones. 2 He led me back and forth among them, and I saw a great many bones on the floor of the valley, bones that were very dry. 3 He asked me, "Son of man, can these bones live?" I said, "Sovereign Lord, you alone know." 4 Then he said to me, "Prophecy to these bones and say to them, 'Dry bones, hear the word of the Lord! 5 This is what the Sovereign Lord says to these bones: I will make breath enter you, and you will come to life. 6 I will attach tendons to you and make flesh come upon you and cover you with skin; I will put breath in you, and you will come to life. Then you will know that I am the Lord.'" 7 So I prophesied as I was commanded. And as I was prophesying, there was a noise, a rattling sound, and the bones came together, bone to bone. 8 I looked, and tendons and flesh appeared on them and skin covered them, but there was no breath in them.

9 Then he said to me, "Prophecy to the breath; prophesy, son of man, and say to it, 'This is what the Sovereign Lord says: Come, breath, from the four winds and breathe into these slain, that they may live.'" 10 So I prophesied as he commanded me, and breath entered them; they came to life and stood up on their feet—a vast army. 11 Then he said to me: "Son of man, these bones are the people of Israel. They say, 'Our bones are dried up and our hope is gone; we are cut off.' 12 Therefore prophesy and say to them: 'This is what the Sovereign Lord says: My people, I am going to open your graves and bring you up from them; I will bring you back to the land of Israel. 13 Then you, my people, will know that I am the Lord, when I open your graves and bring you up from them. 14 I will put my Spirit in you and you will live, and I will settle you in your own land. Then you will know that I the Lord have spoken, and I have done it, declares the Lord.'"

The Epistle: Romans 8:1-11

Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, 2 because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death. 3 For what the law was powerless to do because it was weakened by the flesh, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in the flesh, 4 in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. 5 Those who live according to the flesh have their minds set on what the flesh desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. 6 The mind governed by the flesh is death, but the mind governed by the Spirit is life and peace. 7 The mind governed by the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. 8 Those who are in the realm of the flesh cannot please God. 9 You, however, are not in the realm of the flesh but are in the realm of the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, they do not belong to Christ. 10 But if Christ is in you, then even though your body is subject to death because of sin, the Spirit gives life because of righteousness. 11 And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies because of his Spirit who lives in you.

The Psalm: Psalm 130

Out of the depths I cry to you, Lord;
2 Lord, hear my voice.
Let your ears be attentive
to my cry for mercy.
3 If you, Lord, kept a record of sins,
Lord, who could stand?
4 But with you there is forgiveness,
so that we can, with reverence, serve you.
5 I wait for the Lord, my whole being waits,
and in his word I put my hope.
6 I wait for the Lord
more than watchmen wait for the morning,
more than watchmen wait for the morning.
7 Israel, put your hope in the Lord,
for with the Lord is unfailing love
and with him is full redemption.
8 He himself will redeem Israel
from all their sins.

Notes, Thoughts, Questions

What does Paul encourage us to set our minds on?

This psalm reminds us of our need to confess our sins, and the promise of God's forgiveness.

Part of this psalm is quoted in the Confession and Absolution of one of our services in Lutheran Service Book (Divine Service, Setting Four).

**Notes,
Thoughts,
Questions**

As you read the words of this hymn, draw simple pictures in the margin to illustrate the meaning of each verse.

The Hymn: What Wondrous Love Is This *LSB* 543

What wondrous love is this, O my soul, O my soul!
What wondrous love is this, O my soul!
What wondrous love is this
That caused the Lord of bliss
To bear the dreadful curse for my soul, for my soul,
To bear the dreadful curse for my soul!

When I was sinking down, sinking down, sinking down,
When I was sinking down, sinking down,
When I was sinking down
Beneath God's righteous frown,
Christ laid aside His crown for my soul, for my soul,
Christ laid aside His crown for my soul.

To God and to the Lamb I will sing, I will sing;
To God and to the Lamb I will sing;
To God and to the Lamb,
Who is the great I AM,
While millions join the theme, I will sing, I will sing,
While millions join the theme, I will sing.

And when from death I'm free, I'll sing on, I'll sing on;
And when from death I'm free, I'll sing on.
And when from death I'm free,
I'll sing His love for me,
And through eternity I'll sing on, I'll sing on,
And through eternity I'll sing on.

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What wondrous love is this?

Faith + Life Connections

Many of us have attended a funeral of a friend or loved one. Talk a little about the service: how you felt, the Scriptures read, the hymns sung. How did God's Word give you comfort? Jesus knows how we feel. He, too, mourned a friend. But Jesus has overcome death!

John 11:17-27, 38-53

Look online for the words and music to "Dem Bones spiritual." This song refers to Ezekiel's vision of the valley of dry bones. Ezekiel was told to prophecy to the bones, "Hear the Word of the Lord!" We, too, must hear God's Word. God's Word gives life.

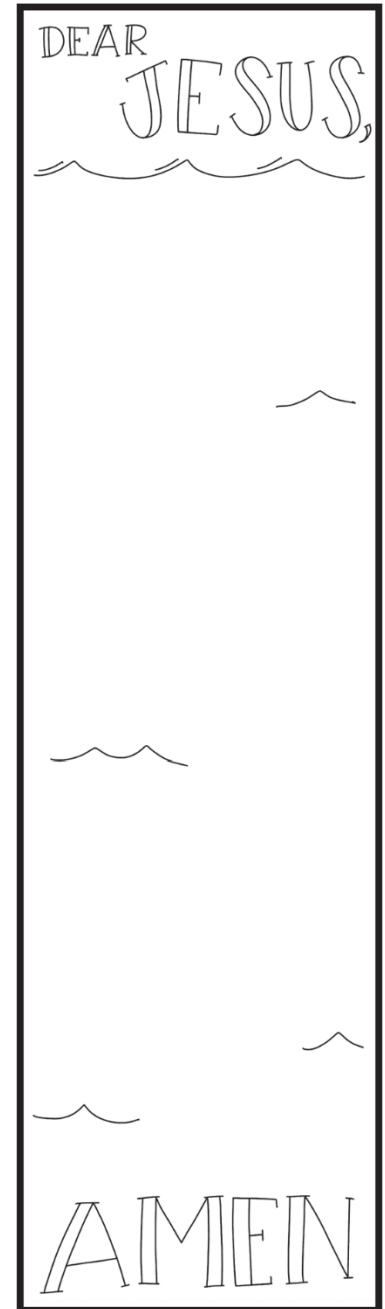
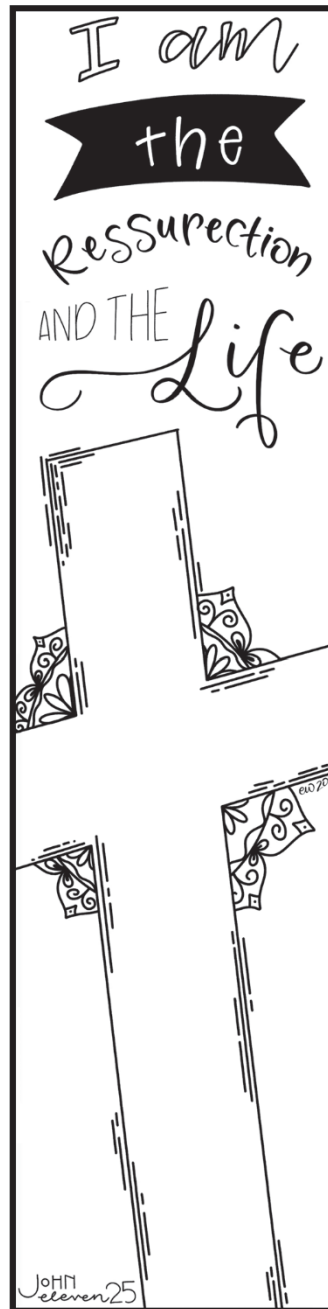
Ezekiel 37:1-14

If you made a list of the sins you committed this week, how long would it be? Thanks be to God that He does not keep a record of our sins! God forgives us and gives us hope.

Psalms 130

Memorize:

[Jesus said] "I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; and whoever lives by believing in me will never die." John 11:25-26



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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.

