

Walking Together in the Word

Devotions on the Weekly Scripture Readings for September 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

September 2–September 7, 2024

This devotional material is based on Bible readings for Sunday, September 8.

Proper 18

The Gospel: Mark 7:31–37

31 Then Jesus left the vicinity of Tyre and went through Sidon, down to the Sea of Galilee and into the region of the Decapolis. 32 There some people brought to him a man who was deaf and could hardly talk, and they begged Jesus to place his hand on him. 33 After he took him aside, away from the crowd, Jesus put his fingers into the man's ears. Then he spit and touched the man's tongue. 34 He looked up to heaven and with a deep sigh said to him, "Ephphatha!" (which means "Be opened!"). 35 At this, the man's ears were opened, his tongue was loosened and he began to speak plainly. 36 Jesus commanded them not to tell anyone. But the more he did so, the more they kept talking about it. 37 People were overwhelmed with amazement. "He has done everything well," they said. "He even makes the deaf hear and the mute speak."

Devotion on the Gospel

There was a man who could not hear and who could not talk. But he had friends who heard about Jesus and what He had done and how He could heal and make well again. And so a little group of people brings this deaf and mute man to Jesus asking Him to touch the man.

But Jesus did not touch the man. Not yet. First Jesus takes the man off by himself and speaks to the man. He speaks to him in the only way the man could understand. Jesus uses "sign language."

He puts His fingers in the man's ears. That's sign language. "I know your problem. You can't hear me." Jesus spits and touches the man's tongue. More sign language. "I know you have a problem with your voice too." Then Jesus looks to heaven. Beautiful sign language! "Only God can help you. That's where the power is. That's where we go."

And then Jesus cries out: "Ephphatha! Open up!" and the man is completely healed. Can you imagine? Oh, the sign language of God! What wonderful signs of love, compassion, grace, and mercy.

I wonder if there is any sign language of God today? Oh, of course there is! Our God takes us off by ourselves and he shows us a baby in a manger—the Savior come into the world for us; He shows us a hill and a cross and the Savior dying there; He shows us the empty Easter grave. What wonderful sign language!

And then some water poured over us in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit—and the gates of heaven are opened and forgiveness is given. Bread and wine become the visible elements through which the very body and blood of the Savior comes to us.

And then His words: "Ephphatha! Open up!" And we are opened by the Spirit to Him and His spiritual healing. Oh, the sign language of God! What wonderful signs of love, compassion, grace, and mercy.

Notes, Thoughts, Questions

In interacting with the deaf and mute man, what was the reason that Jesus took the man aside, away from those who had brought him?

How was Mark 7:35 a direct fulfillment of Isaiah 35:5-6?

Notes, Thoughts, Questions

This is a message of encouragement for those with "fearful hearts." What things will accompany God's coming that will help overcome fear?

Why did Isaiah describe God as coming "with vengeance" and with "divine retribution?"

James admonishes that we must not show favoritism. How can we develop a Christian love that will combat our tendency toward discrimination and showing favoritism? (see 1 John 4:7-13)

After reading this passage from James (especially vv. 14-18), think about the statement: "Man is justified by faith alone, but not by a faith that is alone." What does that mean? Do you agree or disagree?

The Old Testament Reading: Isaiah 35:4-7a

4 say to those with fearful hearts,
"Be strong, do not fear;
your God will come,
he will come with vengeance;
with divine retribution
he will come to save you."

5 Then will the eyes of the blind be opened
and the ears of the deaf unstopped.

6 Then will the lame leap like a deer,
and the mute tongue shout for joy.

Water will gush forth in the wilderness
and streams in the desert.

7 The burning sand will become a pool,
the thirsty ground bubbling springs.

In the haunts where jackals once lay,
grass and reeds and papyrus will grow.

The Epistle: James 2:1-10, 14-18

2 My brothers and sisters, believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ must not show favoritism. 2 Suppose a man comes into your meeting wearing a gold ring and fine clothes, and a poor man in filthy old clothes also comes in. 3 If you show special attention to the man wearing fine clothes and say, "Here's a good seat for you," but say to the poor man, "You stand there" or "Sit on the floor by my feet," 4 have you not discriminated among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts?

5 Listen, my dear brothers and sisters: Has not God chosen those who are poor in the eyes of the world to be rich in faith and to inherit the kingdom he promised those who love him? 6 But you have dishonored the poor. Is it not the rich who are exploiting you? Are they not the ones who are dragging you into court? 7 Are they not the ones who are blaspheming the noble name of him to whom you belong?

8 If you really keep the royal law found in Scripture, "Love your neighbor as yourself," you are doing right. 9 But if you show favoritism, you sin and are convicted by the law as lawbreakers. 10 For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it.

The Psalm: Psalm 146

Praise the Lord.

Praise the Lord, my soul.

- 2 I will praise the Lord all my life;
I will sing praise to my God as long as I live.
- 3 Do not put your trust in princes,
in human beings, who cannot save.
- 4 When their spirit departs, they return to the ground;
on that very day their plans come to nothing.
- 5 Blessed are those whose help is the God of Jacob,
whose hope is in the Lord their God.
- 6 He is the Maker of heaven and earth,
the sea, and everything in them—
he remains faithful forever.
- 7 He upholds the cause of the oppressed
and gives food to the hungry.
The Lord sets prisoners free,
- 8 the Lord gives sight to the blind,
the Lord lifts up those who are bowed down,
the Lord loves the righteous.
- 9 The Lord watches over the foreigner
and sustains the fatherless and the widow,
but he frustrates the ways of the wicked.
- 10 The Lord reigns forever,
your God, O Zion, for all generations.

Praise the Lord.

Notes, Thoughts, Questions

Sing or read "Praise the Almighty" (#797 in Lutheran Service Book) and meditate on the words of the hymn that are based upon Psalm 146.

*Verse to Remember:
Psalm 146:5*

The psalmists urges that we do not put our trust "in princes, in mortal men, who cannot save." Good advice in our highly polarized and political world! Instead, where does the Christian put his or her trust? (see vv. 5-10)

Notes, Thoughts, Questions

In the days of ancient Israel, Gilead was famous for a balsamic resin believed to have healing properties. This African American spiritual, however, is not speaking of a balm for a physical wound. What balm is the hymn referring to that will "heal the sin-sick soul?"

The Hymn: There Is a Balm in Gilead *LSB 749*

Refrain:

There is a balm in Gilead
To make the wounded whole;
There is a balm in Gilead
To heal the sin-sick soul.

1 Sometimes I feel discouraged
And think my work's in vain,
But then the Holy Spirit
Revives my soul again. [Refrain]

2 If you cannot preach like Peter,
If you cannot pray like Paul,
You can tell the love of Jesus
And say He died for all. [Refrain]

3 Don't ever feel discouraged,
For Jesus is your friend;
And if you lack for knowledge,
He'll ne'er refuse to lend. [Refrain]

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Faith + Life Connections

Jesus showed the man how He would heal him. He touched his ears, then his tongue, then pointed to heaven. With the power of God, Jesus made him hear and speak! Jesus shows us how He heals us too. He points us to His Word, where we hear about His forgiveness and eternal life with Him.

Mark 7:31-37

God sent prophets like Isaiah to tell the Old Testament people about the Messiah who would come. The Messiah would give sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, and heal those who can't talk. Who did all that? Jesus! He is the promised Messiah.

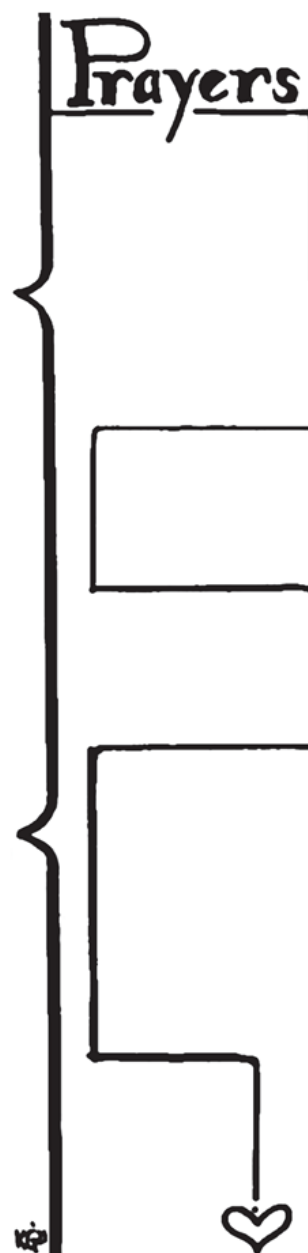
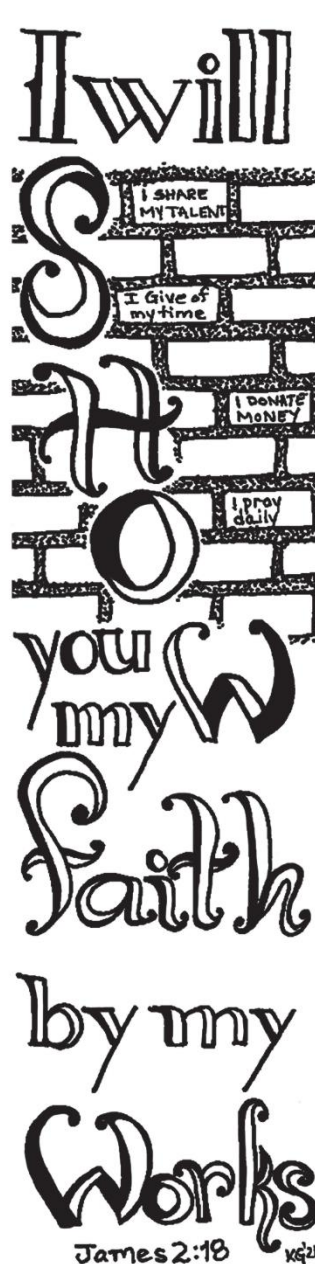
Isaiah 35:4-7a

Have you heard the saying, "Don't judge a book by its cover"? It means you shouldn't judge someone by the way they look. God says, Don't judge anyone at all! Be kind to everyone. Love your neighbor as yourself, as God loves us.

James 2:1-10, 14-18

Memorize:

Blessed are those whose help is the God of Jacob,
whose hope is in the Lord their God.
Psalm 146:5



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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

September 9–September 14, 2024

This devotional material is based on Bible readings for Sunday, September 15.

Proper 19

The Gospel: Mark 9:14–29

14 When they came to the other disciples, they saw a large crowd around them and the teachers of the law arguing with them. 15 As soon as all the people saw Jesus, they were overwhelmed with wonder and ran to greet him. 16 “What are you arguing with them about?” he asked. 17 A man in the crowd answered, “Teacher, I brought you my son, who is possessed by a spirit that has robbed him of speech. 18 Whenever it seizes him, it throws him to the ground. He foams at the mouth, gnashes his teeth and becomes rigid. I asked your disciples to drive out the spirit, but they could not.” 19 “You unbelieving generation,” Jesus replied, “how long shall I stay with you? How long shall I put up with you? Bring the boy to me.” 20 So they brought him. When the spirit saw Jesus, it immediately threw the boy into a convulsion. He fell to the ground and rolled around, foaming at the mouth. 21 Jesus asked the boy’s father, “How long has he been like this?” “From childhood,” he answered. 22 “It has often thrown him into fire or water to kill him. But if you can do anything, take pity on us and help us.” 23 “If you can?” said Jesus. “Everything is possible for one who believes.” 24 Immediately the boy’s father exclaimed, “I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief!” 25 When Jesus saw that a crowd was running to the scene, he rebuked the impure spirit. “You deaf and mute spirit,” he said, “I command you, come out of him and never enter him again.” 26 The spirit shrieked, convulsed him violently and came out. The boy looked so much like a corpse that many said, “He’s dead.” 27 But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him to his feet, and he stood up.

28 After Jesus had gone indoors, his disciples asked him privately, “Why couldn’t we drive it out?” 29 He replied, “This kind can come out only by prayer.”

Devotion on the Gospel

“If.” What an awful word. There’s so much doubt tied up in that word. So much worry. So much indecision. “If.” We hear that awful word in this text. The father of the boy possessed by an evil spirit brings his boy to Jesus, hoping against all hope that somehow Jesus can help the child. “If you can do anything, take pity on us and help us!”

If? If you can? Jesus has been doing one miracle after another throughout the Gospel of Mark. If? Of course He can. And He does!

We can be very similar to that father. We believe. We have faith in Jesus Christ. He is our Savior. But sometimes we struggle in our faith. There are times when we look at what’s going on in our lives and we say, “Lord, if You’re real, why am I going through this stuff? Why am I hurting? Where are You, God? If You love me, if I’m Your child, if You really care, then what’s going on? If.

If? There are no ifs. There’s only God and His power and His love. And even when we are riddled with doubt, when we question our faith, when we say that awful little word, “if,” He points us to a cross and to an empty tomb. There are no ifs there. Just a crystal clear proclamation of life and victory and forgiveness and love and mercy and joy.

God, through His Spirit, works faith in our hearts. He works through the water of Baptism, through the power of His Word, through the gift of the Lord’s Supper. He works to nourish, to encourage, to strengthen our faith. He works in us so that we don’t say “if,” rather we can confess with Paul: “We are hard pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed.” (2 Corinthians 4:8-9)

Notes, Thoughts, Questions

Jesus reminded the doubtful father that with God all things are possible. How did the man respond?

*Verse to Remember:
Mark 9:24*

What important thing did the father recognize?

Notes, Thoughts, Questions

This is the third of four "servant songs" in Isaiah which apply to the suffering Servant, Jesus Christ. How does the Servant show His determination to carry out His commission? How does He show confident trust in God the Father?

Read Isaiah 50:7-9 and Romans 8:31-39. What comparisons and similarities do you find?

What was James saying about himself and the local pastors and others he was writing to by saying "we all stumble in many ways?"

James uses a bit, a rudder, and a spark as illustrations of what the tongue is capable of. Why is the tongue singled out by James as the member of the body that is most capable of inflicting harm?

The Old Testament Reading: Isaiah 50:4-10

The Sovereign Lord has given me a well-instructed tongue,
to know the word that sustains the weary.
He wakens me morning by morning,
wakens my ear to listen like one being instructed.
5 The Sovereign Lord has opened my ears;
I have not been rebellious, I have not turned away.
6 I offered my back to those who beat me,
my cheeks to those who pulled out my beard;
I did not hide my face from mocking and spitting.
7 Because the Sovereign Lord helps me,
I will not be disgraced.
Therefore have I set my face like flint,
and I know I will not be put to shame.
8 He who vindicates me is near.
Who then will bring charges against me?
Let us face each other! Who is my accuser? Let him confront me!
9 It is the Sovereign Lord who helps me.
Who will condemn me?
They will all wear out like a garment;
the moths will eat them up.
10 Who among you fears the Lord
and obeys the word of his servant?
Let the one who walks in the dark,
who has no light,
trust in the name of the Lord
and rely on their God.

The Epistle: James 3:1-12

3 Not many of you should become teachers, my fellow believers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly. 2 We all stumble in many ways. Anyone who is never at fault in what they say is perfect, able to keep their whole body in check.
3 When we put bits into the mouths of horses to make them obey us, we can turn the whole animal. 4 Or take ships as an example. Although they are so large and are driven by strong winds, they are steered by a very small rudder wherever the pilot wants to go. 5 Likewise, the tongue is a small part of the body, but it makes great boasts. Consider what a great forest is set on fire by a small spark. 6 The tongue also is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body. It corrupts the whole body, sets the whole course of one's life on fire, and is itself set on fire by hell.
7 All kinds of animals, birds, reptiles and sea creatures are being tamed and have been tamed by mankind, 8 but no human being can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison.
9 With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse human beings, who have been made in God's likeness. 10 Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers and sisters, this should not be. 11 Can both fresh water and salt water flow from the same spring? 12 My brothers and sisters, can a fig tree bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Neither can a salt spring produce fresh water.

The Psalm: Psalm 116:1-9

1 I love the Lord, for he heard my voice;
he heard my cry for mercy.

2 Because he turned his ear to me,
I will call on him as long as I live.

3 The cords of death entangled me,
the anguish of the grave came over me;
I was overcome by distress and sorrow.

4 Then I called on the name of the Lord:
“Lord, save me!”

5 The Lord is gracious and righteous;
our God is full of compassion.

6 The Lord protects the unwary;
when I was brought low, he saved me.

7 Return to your rest, my soul,
for the Lord has been good to you.

8 For you, Lord, have delivered me from death,
my eyes from tears,
my feet from stumbling,

9 that I may walk before the Lord
in the land of the living.

Notes, Thoughts, Questions

Psalm 116 is a song of thanksgiving and praise. List the reasons the psalmist gives as to why he praises his God.

In our personal thanksgiving and praise to God, what are the reasons that we would give our God praise?



Notes, Thoughts, Questions

*How is Jesus “near to
bless” and how does
He come to “crowded
street, by beds of
pain” today?*

The Hymn: Your Hand, O Lord, in Days of Old *LSB 846*

Your hand, O Lord, in days of old
Was strong to heal and save;
It triumphed over ills and death,
O'er darkness and the grave.
To You they came, the blind, the mute,
The palsied and the lame,
The lepers in their misery,
The sick with fevered frame.

Your touch then, Lord, brought life and health,
Gave speech and strength and sight;
And youth renewed and frenzy calmed
Revealed You, Lord of light.
And now, O Lord, be near to bless,
Almighty as before,
In crowded street, by beds of pain,
As by Gennes'ret's shore.

O be our great deliv'rer still,
The Lord of life and death;
Restore and quicken, soothe and bless,
With Your life-giving breath.
To hands that work and eyes that see
Give wisdom's healing pow'r
That whole and sick and weak and strong
May praise You evermore.

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Faith + Life Connections

What are some things you know you can do? Ride a bike? Count to 100? Recite the multiplication tables? What are some things that are impossible to do? Lift a car. Jump to the moon. Heal your sick friend. Some things are impossible for us. But not for God. With God, all things are possible!

Mark 9:14-29

Sometimes people aren't very nice to us. They might say mean words or hurt us, even when we are doing the right thing. When that happens, we can turn to God for help and comfort. We can trust Him to be with us and care for us.

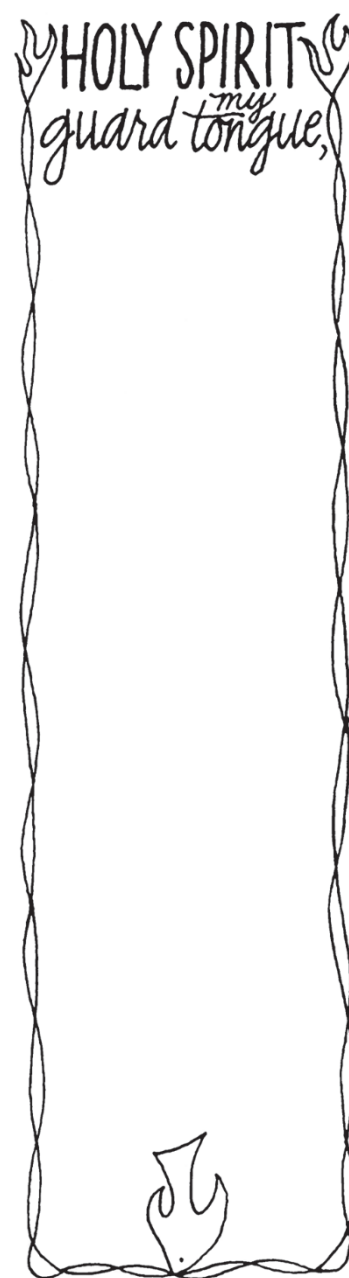
Isaiah 50:4-10

What is the most powerful part of your body? Your tongue! With your tongue, you can say mean words that hurt and anger others or you can say kind words that make others feel good and loved. God helps us use our powerful tongues for good!

James 3:1-12

Memorize:

"I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief!" Mark 9:24



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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

September 16–September 21, 2024

This devotional material is based on Bible readings for Sunday, September 22.

Proper 20

The Gospel: Mark 9:30–37

30 They left that place and passed through Galilee. Jesus did not want anyone to know where they were, 31 because he was teaching his disciples. He said to them, “The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men. They will kill him, and after three days he will rise.” 32 But they did not understand what he meant and were afraid to ask him about it.

33 They came to Capernaum. When he was in the house, he asked them, “What were you arguing about on the road?” 34 But they kept quiet because on the way they had argued about who was the greatest.

35 Sitting down, Jesus called the Twelve and said, “Anyone who wants to be first must be the very last, and the servant of all.”

36 He took a little child whom he placed among them. Taking the child in his arms, he said to them, 37 “Whoever welcomes one of these little children in my name welcomes me; and whoever welcomes me does not welcome me but the one who sent me.”

Devotion on the Gospel

Can’t you just hear them? Childishly arguing about who was the greatest. I can almost hear Andrew telling his brother Peter: “I saw Him before you did, you know.” And Peter replying: “Okay, but He called me the “Rock” on which He’d build the church!” And James adding his two cents: “Don’t forget, He took me up the mountain to meet Moses and Elijah!” Can’t you just hear them arguing?

Might it sound somewhat familiar? Might it remind us of our pride and our quest to be number one? We spend a lot of time in our lives trying to be first, trying to be the greatest—often times because of pride, because of jealousy, because of sin.

But today we meet a man who wants us to know that what should matter in our lives is not whether we’re number one or whether we’re the greatest. That man is Jesus Christ, the Son of God. He meets us on the road of pride and selfishness and He turns everything upside down. Today Jesus says: If you want to be first, then you need to be a servant.

Do you want to know how it’s done? Then just look to Jesus. He becomes a baby. God becomes a man in order to take our place and to pay our price. He becomes a man to die for us and to forgive us all our sins. There’s a servant! He said as much, didn’t He? “The Son of Man did not come to this world to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many.” He becomes the lowest of the low, the smallest of the small, the most humble servant of all—for you and for me.

Notes, Thoughts, Questions

How does Jesus’ teaching about how to become great in the kingdom of God fit in with Jesus’ teaching about discipleship (see Mark 8:34)?

What did Jesus say about welcoming children (an example of the lowest by the world’s standards)?

Notes, Thoughts, Questions

Although there was a plot against Jeremiah's life, how did he show his continued confidence in God's dealing with the situation?

How may we understand Jeremiah's call to God for vengeance on those seeking to take his life when compared with Jesus' instruction to love and to pray for your enemies?

*Verse to Remember:
James 3:17*

James speaks about two kinds of wisdom: earthly and heavenly. What is at the heart of earthly wisdom? (3:13-16) What are the characteristics of heavenly wisdom? (3:17-18)

James urges us to submit to God. How does that submission to God enable us successfully to draw near to God and resist the devil?

The Old Testament Reading: Jeremiah 11:18-20

18 Because the Lord revealed their plot to me, I knew it, for at that time he showed me what they were doing. 19 I had been like a gentle lamb led to the slaughter; I did not realize that they had plotted against me, saying,

“Let us destroy the tree and its fruit;
let us cut him off from the land of the living,
that his name be remembered no more.”

20 But you, Lord Almighty, who judge righteously
and test the heart and mind,
let me see your vengeance on them,
for to you I have committed my cause.

The Epistle: James 3:13 - 4:10

13 Who is wise and understanding among you? Let them show it by their good life, by deeds done in the humility that comes from wisdom. 14 But if you harbor bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast about it or deny the truth. 15 Such “wisdom” does not come down from heaven but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic. 16 For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice.

17 But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere. 18 Peacemakers who sow in peace reap a harvest of righteousness.

4 What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? 2 You desire but do not have, so you kill. You covet but you cannot get what you want, so you quarrel and fight. You do not have because you do not ask God. 3 When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.

4 You adulterous people, don't you know that friendship with the world means enmity against God? Therefore, anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God. 5 Or do you think Scripture says without reason that he jealously longs for the spirit he has caused to dwell in us? 6 But he gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says: “God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble.”

7 Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. 8 Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. 9 Grieve, mourn and wail. Change your laughter to mourning and your joy to gloom. 10 Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.

The Psalm: Psalm 54

Save me, O God, by your name;
vindicate me by your might.

2 Hear my prayer, O God;
listen to the words of my mouth.

3 Arrogant foes are attacking me;
ruthless people are trying to kill me—
people without regard for God.

4 Surely God is my help;
the Lord is the one who sustains me.

5 Let evil recoil on those who slander me;
in your faithfulness destroy them.

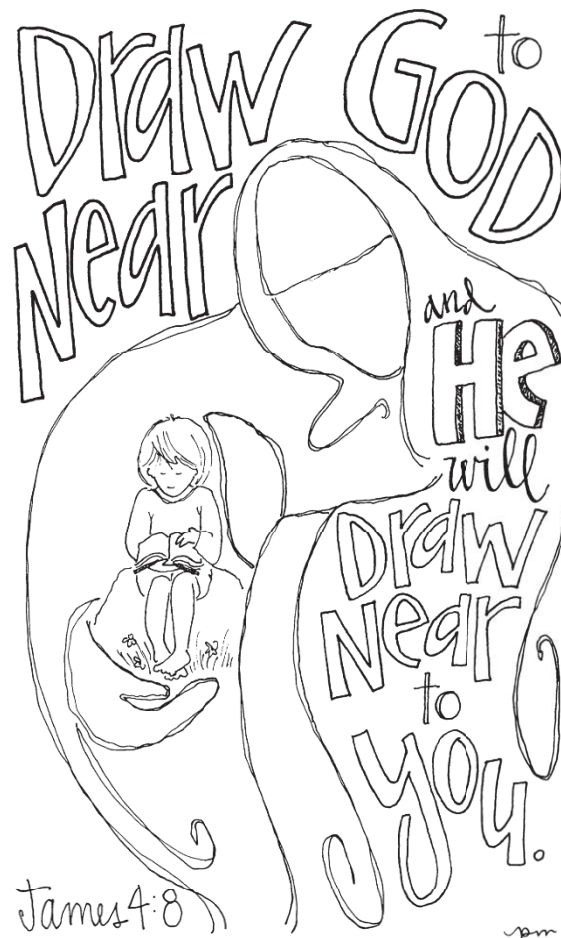
6 I will sacrifice a freewill offering to you;
I will praise your name, Lord, for it is good.

7 You have delivered me from all my troubles,
and my eyes have looked in triumph on my foes.

Notes, Thoughts, Questions

The title of the psalm notes that this is a psalm of David which was written “when the Ziphites had gone to Saul and said, ‘Is not David hiding among us?’” Read the story as recorded in 1 Samuel 23.

Notice that at the very center of the psalm is a confession by David of confidence in his God (verse 4). How does this encourage and inspire us as we face trouble and sorrow in our lives?



Notes, Thoughts, Questions

This Reformation-era hymn is the prayer of the Christian that God would by His mercy and grace keep us in His fold. Take time to pray each verse of this hymn throughout the day.

The Hymn: Let Me Be Thine Forever *LSB 689*

Let me be Thine forever,
My faithful God and Lord;
Let me forsake Thee never
Nor wander from Thy Word.

Lord, do not let me waver,
But give me steadfastness,
And for such grace forever
Thy holy name I'll bless.

Lord Jesus, my salvation,
My light, my life divine,
My only consolation,
O make me wholly Thine!
For Thou hast dearly bought me
With blood and bitter pain.
Let me, since Thou hast sought me,
Eternal life obtain.

O Thou, O Holy Spirit,
My comforter and guide,
Grant that in Jesus' merit
I always may confide,
Him to the end confessing
Whom I have known by faith.
Give me Thy constant blessing
And grant a Christian death.

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Faith + Life Connections

"I get to go first!" Have you ever heard that, or maybe even said it? Sometimes we think we have the right to be first, to go ahead of others, to get the best of something. But that's not Jesus' way. Jesus shows us how to put others first, to serve, to show love. He helps us follow His example!

Mark 9:30-37

Jeremiah was a prophet, chosen by God to speak God's words to His people. But the people didn't like Jeremiah's words. They didn't want to be told they were sinning against God. They planned to get rid of Jeremiah. What did Jeremiah do? Trust in God. That's what we can do too!

Jeremiah 11:18-20


It's good to be smart. It's better to be wise. True wisdom is peace-loving, full of mercy and good fruit. True wisdom comes from God.

James 3:13 - 4:10

Memorize:

But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere.
James 3:17



Dear Jesus 

 AMEN

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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

September 23–September 28, 2024

This devotional material is based on Bible readings for Sunday, September 29.

Proper 21

The Gospel: Mark 9:38–50

38 “Teacher,” said John, “we saw someone driving out demons in your name and we told him to stop, because he was not one of us.”

39 “Do not stop him,” Jesus said. “For no one who does a miracle in my name can in the next moment say anything bad about me, 40 for whoever is not against us is for us. 41 Truly I tell you, anyone who gives you a cup of water in my name because you belong to the Messiah will certainly not lose their reward.

42 “If anyone causes one of these little ones—those who believe in me—to stumble, it would be better for them if a large millstone were hung around their neck and they were thrown into the sea. 43 If your hand causes you to stumble, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life maimed than with two hands to go into hell, where the fire never goes out. [44] 45 And if your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life crippled than to have two feet and be thrown into hell. [46] 47 And if your eye causes you to stumble, pluck it out. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into hell, 48 where “the worms that eat them do not die,

and the fire is not quenched.’ 49 Everyone will be salted with fire. 50 “Salt is good, but if it loses its saltiness, how can you make it salty again? Have salt among yourselves, and be at peace with each other.”

Devotion on the Gospel

Jesus doesn’t pull any punches. He’s got some very strong words here in Mark 9. In fact, according to this text, each weekend when I see you coming to church I ought to see a group of people coming in with hands cut off, and on crutches with no foot, and half blind. And you ought to see the same with me. After all, Jesus says if your hand or foot causes you to sin, cut it off. If your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out.

Oh, we are a sinful people! And our Lord is illustrating for us the seriousness of that sin. Our God takes sin very, very seriously. He hates sin! And in a very strong way He exhorts us to get rid of it in our lives.

But the wonderful good news is that we have a God who doesn’t simply demand that things get cut off, but rather we have a God who heals. Though He hates the sin, He loves the sinner. And so he washes us in the healing waters of Holy Baptism. He feeds us through the nourishing body and blood of the Sacrament. And He calls us forgiven and redeemed children. And in those words we are healed.

So the sin in our lives does not require us to cut things off or to pluck things out. No, that sin in our lives is washed away and forgiven. It is not our hands and feet that are cut off because of sin, but it is Christ’s hands and feet that were pierced for our transgressions. And it is by His shed blood and His sacrificial death that we are made whole and clean.

Notes, Thoughts, Questions

If sin is so serious, serious enough to “cut it off,” what does it say about our need for Christ’s forgiveness?

Since we know we live daily under God’s grace and forgiveness, why should we be so concerned about avoiding sinning? (see Romans 6:1-14)

Notes, Thoughts, Questions

What was the Lord's response to the people's complaint? (see 11:18-20, 31-32)

How did the Lord solve the problem of Moses' discouragement?

Why is confessing sins to one another prescribed as part of the process of prayer for healing of the sick?

Verse to Remember: James 5:16

James states that the prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective (verse 16). How may we approach God as righteous men and

The Old Testament Reading: Numbers 11:4-6, 10-16, 24-29

4 The rabble with them began to crave other food, and again the Israelites started wailing and said, "If only we had meat to eat! 5 We remember the fish we ate in Egypt at no cost—also the cucumbers, melons, leeks, onions and garlic. 6 But now we have lost our appetite; we never see anything but this manna!"

10 Moses heard the people of every family wailing at the entrance to their tents. The Lord became exceedingly angry, and Moses was troubled. 11 He asked the Lord, "Why have you brought this trouble on your servant? What have I done to displease you that you put the burden of all these people on me? 12 Did I conceive all these people? Did I give them birth? Why do you tell me to carry them in my arms, as a nurse carries an infant, to the land you promised on oath to their ancestors? 13 Where can I get meat for all these people? They keep wailing to me, 'Give us meat to eat!' 14 I cannot carry all these people by myself; the burden is too heavy for me. 15 If this is how you are going to treat me, please go ahead and kill me—if I have found favor in your eyes—and do not let me face my own ruin."

16 The Lord said to Moses: "Bring me seventy of Israel's elders who are known to you as leaders and officials among the people. Have them come to the tent of meeting, that they may stand there with you.

24 So Moses went out and told the people what the Lord had said. He brought together seventy of their elders and had them stand around the tent. 25 Then the Lord came down in the cloud and spoke with him, and he took some of the power of the Spirit that was on him and put it on the seventy elders. When the Spirit rested on them, they prophesied—but did not do so again. 26 However, two men, whose names were Eldad and Medad, had remained in the camp. They were listed among the elders, but did not go out to the tent. Yet the Spirit also rested on them, and they prophesied in the camp. 27 A young man ran and told Moses, "Eldad and Medad are prophesying in the camp." 28 Joshua son of Nun, who had been Moses' aide since youth, spoke up and said, "Moses, my lord, stop them!" 29 But Moses replied, "Are you jealous for my sake? I wish that all the Lord's people were prophets and that the Lord would put his Spirit on them!"

The Epistle: James 5:13-20

13 Is anyone among you in trouble? Let them pray. Is anyone happy? Let them sing songs of praise. 14 Is anyone among you sick? Let them call the elders of the church to pray over them and anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord. 15 And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise them up. If they have sinned, they will be forgiven. 16 Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.

17 Elijah was a human being, even as we are. He prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the land for three and a half years. 18 Again he prayed, and the heavens gave rain, and the earth produced its crops.

19 My brothers and sisters, if one of you should wander from the truth and someone should bring that person back, 20 remember this: Whoever turns a sinner from the error of their way will save them from death and cover over a multitude of sins.

The Psalm: Psalm 104:27-35

All creatures look to you
to give them their food at the proper time.

28 When you give it to them,
they gather it up;
when you open your hand,
they are satisfied with good things.

29 When you hide your face,
they are terrified;
when you take away their breath,
they die and return to the dust.

30 When you send your Spirit,
they are created,
and you renew the face of the ground.

31 May the glory of the Lord endure forever;
may the Lord rejoice in his works—

32 he who looks at the earth, and it trembles,
who touches the mountains, and they smoke.

33 I will sing to the Lord all my life;
I will sing praise to my God as long as I live.

34 May my meditation be pleasing to him,
as I rejoice in the Lord.

35 But may sinners vanish from the earth
and the wicked be no more.

Praise the Lord, my soul.

Praise the Lord.

Notes, Thoughts, Questions

How does the promise of Psalm 104:27 give you comfort and peace? (see also Matthew 6:25-34)

The mountains, oceans, and animals of creation are great and marvelous, but the creation is nothing compared to the Creator! Psalm 104:32 describes the Almighty's power over creation and everything in it. Does this fact bring fear? Or comfort?

Notes, Thoughts, Questions

This hymn seeks to support us as we move towards our heavenly future. What words does the hymn writer use to encourage us in this life even when “the way be drear” and “the foe be near?”

The Hymn: Jesus, Lead Thou On

LSB 718

Jesus, lead Thou on
Till our rest is won;
And although the way be cheerless,
We will follow calm and fearless.
Guide us by Thy hand
To our fatherland.

If the way be drear,
If the foe be near,
Let not faithless fears o’ertake us;
Let not faith and hope forsake us;
For through many_a woe
To our home we go.

When we seek relief
From a long-felt grief,
When temptations come alluring,
Make us patient and enduring.
Show us that bright shore
Where we weep no more.

Jesus, lead Thou on
Till our rest is won.
Heav’nly leader, still direct us,
Still support, console, protect us,
Till we safely stand
In our fatherland.

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Faith + Life Connections

Does Jesus really want us to cut off our hand if it makes us sin? No, what Jesus wants us to do is to get rid of the things that tempt us to sin. Does cheating tempt you? Move so you can't see someone's paper. Does a show cause you to sin? Stop watching the show. And remember, when you do sin, Jesus forgives you.

Mark 9:38-50

Moses was discouraged. The Israelites were complaining again. So Moses went to God, and God filled 70 men with His Spirit. God encouraged Moses with these 70 men who spoke God's words. When you are discouraged, go to God. He will send people to encourage you!

Numbers 11:4-6, 10-16, 24-29

Why is it so good and important to be a part of a Christian church? We pray for one another in times of sickness and need. We sing songs of praise to God together. We help one another. Church is a blessing!

James 5:13-20

Memorize:

The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.

James 5:16



mark 9:50

I pray with
GREAT POWER

Amen!

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Devote Yourself to Prayer *Colossians 4:2*

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