

Walking Together in the Word

Devotions on the Weekly Scripture Readings for July 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 1–July 6, 2024

This devotional material is based on Bible readings for Sunday, July 7.

Proper 9

The Gospel: Mark 6:1–13

Jesus left there and went to his hometown, accompanied by his disciples. 2 When the Sabbath came, he began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard him were amazed.

“Where did this man get these things?” they asked. “What’s this wisdom that has been given him? What are these remarkable miracles he is performing? 3 Isn’t this the carpenter? Isn’t this Mary’s son and the brother of James, Joseph, Judas and Simon? Aren’t his sisters here with us?” And they took offense at him.

4 Jesus said to them, “A prophet is not without honor except in his own town, among his relatives and in his own home.” 5 He could not do any miracles there, except lay his hands on a few sick people and heal them. 6 He was amazed at their lack of faith.

Then Jesus went around teaching from village to village. 7 Calling the Twelve to him, he began to send them out two by two and gave them authority over impure spirits.

8 These were his instructions: “Take nothing for the journey except a staff—no bread, no bag, no money in your belts. 9 Wear sandals but not an extra shirt.

10 Whenever you enter a house, stay there until you leave that town. 11 And if any place will not welcome you or listen to you, leave that place and shake the dust off your feet as a testimony against them.”

12 They went out and preached that people should repent. 13 They drove out many demons and anointed many sick people with oil and healed them.

Devotion on the Gospel

I loved the old TV show from the 60’s and 70’s “Mission Impossible.” More recently there are a few Mission Impossible movies too. Remember the words when a new mission was given to the agents? “Your mission, should you choose to accept it . . . ”

Isn’t that great? That statement gives options. You can say, now that mission sounds a little dangerous, no I won’t be accepting that one. You can say, you know, I just don’t feel up to it today. I’ll decline this mission. I’ve got other things to do. Just can’t fit it into my schedule.

Maybe you’ve noticed that the mission we’ve been given by God isn’t like that. One translation puts it this way: “Jesus summoned the Twelve and sent them out in pairs on a mission.” There is no escape clause in the Lord’s call to mission. Jesus simply says to them: “Follow me.” And they did. It’s really beautiful.

But for as many people who accept the Lord’s mission without question, there are just as many (if not more) who try to escape the Lord’s call. Remember Jonah? Like Jonah, many of us try to run in the opposite direction, away from God’s call to mission.

Oh, but God calls us to mission. God calls us to share. God calls us to speak of Him and His love and His grace. He calls us to tell others that with Jesus, life can be radically different. That when you know Jesus, everything changes. When you know Jesus, you have hope and you have security and you have forgiveness and you have salvation.

Jesus says to us: “Follow me.” And then He sends us out. You probably don’t have to go far. Maybe just down the street. Maybe just down the hallway at home. You’ve got a mission. And it’s not impossible, because our God goes with us.

Notes, Thoughts, Questions

How did the people in Jesus’ hometown react to His ministry? Why did they react that way?

As the disciples were sent out by Jesus, upon whom were they forced to depend as they carried out their assignment? What message were they to give to those who rejected them?

Notes, Thoughts, Questions

God addresses Ezekiel as “son of man.” This phrase is used 93 times in Ezekiel—a reminder to him of his humanity. Why do you think this reminder was important?

How did God describe the people to whom He was sending Ezekiel? Why did He warn Ezekiel about the heart of the people?

Why did Paul delight in weakness and hardships?

Why is it often hard for us to delight in weakness?

The Old Testament Reading: Ezekiel 2:1-5

He said to me, “Son of man, stand up on your feet and I will speak to you.”
2 As he spoke, the Spirit came into me and raised me to my feet, and I heard him speaking to me.

3 He said: “Son of man, I am sending you to the Israelites, to a rebellious nation that has rebelled against me; they and their ancestors have been in revolt against me to this very day. 4 The people to whom I am sending you are obstinate and stubborn. Say to them, ‘This is what the Sovereign Lord says.’ 5 And whether they listen or fail to listen—for they are a rebellious people—they will know that a prophet has been among them.

My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.

The Epistle: 2 Corinthians 12:1-10

I must go on boasting. Although there is nothing to be gained, I will go on to visions and revelations from the Lord. 2 I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven. Whether it was in the body or out of the body I do not know—God knows. 3 And I know that this man—whether in the body or apart from the body I do not know, but God knows— 4 was caught up to paradise and heard inexpressible things, things that no one is permitted to tell. 5 I will boast about a man like that, but I will not boast about myself, except about my weaknesses. 6 Even if I should choose to boast, I would not be a fool, because I would be speaking the truth. But I refrain, so no one will think more of me than is warranted by what I do or say, 7 or because of these surpassingly great revelations. Therefore, in order to keep me from becoming conceited, I was given a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me. 8 Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. 9 But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may rest on me. 10 That is why, for Christ’s sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

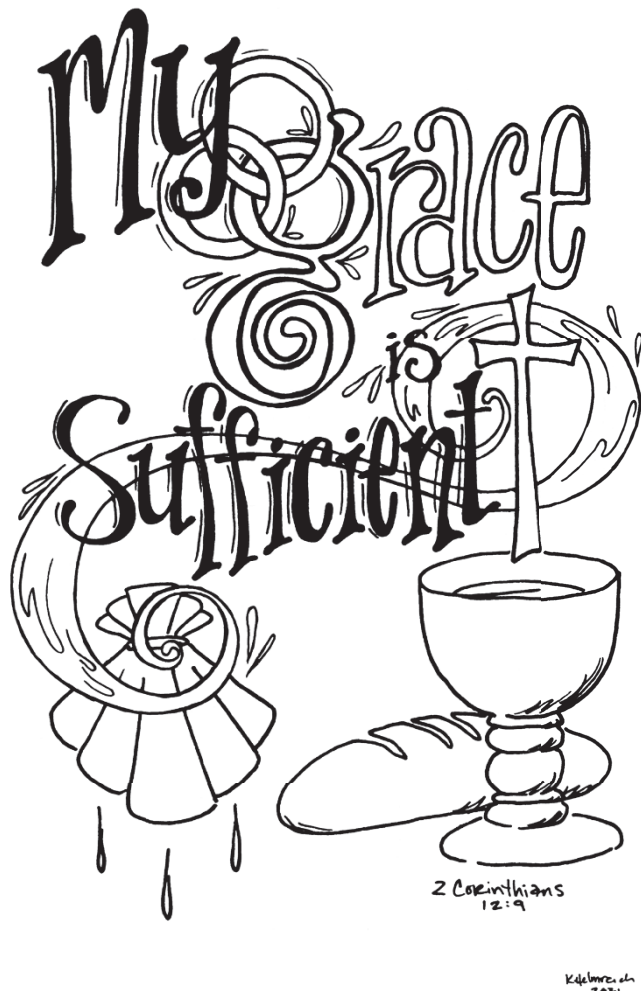
The Psalm: Psalm 123

- I lift up my eyes to you,
to you who sit enthroned in heaven.
- 2 As the eyes of slaves look to the hand of their master,
as the eyes of a female slave look to the hand of her mistress,
so our eyes look to the Lord our God,
till he shows us his mercy.
- 3 Have mercy on us, Lord, have mercy on us,
for we have endured no end of contempt.
- 4 We have endured no end
of ridicule from the arrogant,
of contempt from the proud.

Notes, Thoughts, Questions

How does the psalmist show the humility of God's people? What is their prayer?

What, according to the psalmist, is the response of God's people to those who treat them with ridicule and contempt?



Notes, Thoughts, Questions

This hymn is a prayer where each stanza gently reiterates our desire for Christ to save the lost. Think about the people in your life who do not have faith in Jesus and pray this prayer to the heavenly Father.

The Hymn: O Christ, Our True and Only Light LSB 839

O Christ, our true and only light,
Enlighten those who sit in night;
Let those afar now hear Your voice
And in Your fold with us rejoice.

Fill with the radiance of Your grace
The souls now lost in error's maze;
Enlighten those whose inmost minds
Some dark delusion haunts and blinds.

O gently call those gone astray
That they may find the saving way!
Let ev'ry conscience sore oppressed
In You find peace and heav'nly rest.

Shine on the darkened and the cold;
Recall the wand'ers to Your fold.
Unite all those who walk apart;
Confirm the weak and doubting heart,

That they with us may evermore
Such grace with wond'ring thanks adore
And endless praise to You be giv'n
By all Your Church in earth and heav'n.

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Faith + Life Connections

What kinds of jobs do your parents give you? Do you obey them? Jesus gave His disciples a very important job: to go out and heal people and tell them that the Savior had come! What did disciples do? They obeyed Him! Jesus gives you the same job: Go and tell!

Mark 6:1-13

Do you know what it means to be stubborn? It means to refuse to change the way you think or act. God's people were being stubborn—they kept on sinning and ignoring God. God chose Ezekiel to be His prophet, to speak God's words to them. Do you think they listened to Ezekiel?

Ezekiel 2:1-5

“When I am weak, I am strong” Paul said. That doesn't seem to make sense, does it? But Paul knew that his own strength didn't matter. It's God's strength that matters. God gives us His strength so we can follow Him and tell others about Him.

2 Corinthians 12:1-10

Memorize:

My grace is sufficient for you,
for my power is made perfect
in weakness.

2 Corinthians 12:9



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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

July 8–July 13, 2024

This devotional material is based on Bible readings for Sunday, July 14.

Proper 10

The Gospel: Mark 6:14–29

King Herod heard about this, for Jesus' name had become well known. Some were saying, "John the Baptist has been raised from the dead, and that is why miraculous powers are at work in him." 15 Others said, "He is Elijah." And still others claimed, "He is a prophet, like one of the prophets of long ago." 16 But when Herod heard this, he said, "John, whom I beheaded, has been raised from the dead!" 17 For Herod himself had given orders to have John arrested, and he had him bound and put in prison. He did this because of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, whom he had married. 18 For John had been saying to Herod, "It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife." 19 So Herodias nursed a grudge against John and wanted to kill him. But she was not able to, 20 because Herod feared John and protected him, knowing him to be a righteous and holy man. When Herod heard John, he was greatly puzzled; yet he liked to listen to him. 21 Finally the opportune time came. On his birthday Herod gave a banquet for his high officials and military commanders and the leading men of Galilee. 22 When the daughter of Herodias came in and danced, she pleased Herod and his dinner guests. The king said to the girl, "Ask me for anything you want, and I'll give it to you." 23 And he promised her with an oath, "Whatever you ask I will give you, up to half my kingdom." 24 She went out and said to her mother, "What shall I ask for?" "The head of John the Baptist," she answered. 25 At once the girl hurried in to the king with the request: "I want you to give me right now the head of John the Baptist on a platter." 26 The king was greatly distressed, but because of his oaths and his dinner guests, he did not want to refuse her. 27 So he immediately sent an executioner with orders to bring John's head. The man went, beheaded John in the prison, 28 and brought back his head on a platter. He presented it to the girl, and she gave it to her mother. 29 On hearing of this, John's disciples came and took his body and laid it in a tomb.

Devotion on the Gospel

What a terrible story! It is a horrific account of the violent end of a great prophet of God. It is a gruesome tale of anger and revenge, resentment and death. John the Baptist, his head brutally cut off his body, offered on a platter to the bloodthirsty wife of Herod.

John the Baptist had an unswerving commitment of speaking truth to power. He confronted the king about his adulterous marriage to his brother's wife, Herodias. And John's loud judgment so angered Herodias that she was determined to destroy John if given the chance. And that chance came the night of Herod's birthday bash. After a suggestive dance by Herod's niece and step-daughter, he rewards her with an open-ended offer: "Ask whatever you want and I will give it to you!" Herodias tells her what she should ask for: John the Baptist's head on a platter.

What a terrible story! Where is Jesus in this story? Oh, Jesus is key to understanding this story! John's awful and gruesome death is a foreshadowing of Jesus' own awful and gruesome death. Jesus also had an unswerving commitment of speaking truth to power. He confronted scribes and Pharisees. He confronted the religious establishment. He also confronted sin in every form. He confronted self-righteousness and pride and lust and greed and arrogance and hate and hypocrisy.

And then Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life." He has compassion on the wayward and he cares for the sinner. He shows love to those who think they can't be loved and He forgives those who think they are unforgiveable. He willingly faces the executioner's cross because it is through the cross that grace is given to you and to me. He dies a gruesome death, but it is a death that cannot hold or control Him. He is risen—so that death cannot hold or control you or me.

Where is Jesus in John's story? Oh, John would tell you: He's all over it! In life—and in death—John's story points us to Jesus.

Notes, Thoughts, Questions

What was it that prompted Herod to quiet John by arresting and imprisoning him? Why did he not right away give in to his wife's desire to have John put to death?

What were the three opinions about Jesus that King Herod was told? What was the fearful conclusion that was reached by the king?

Notes, Thoughts, Questions

Where did Amos prophesy and what person did he prophesy against? What risk was Amos taking by doing this?

Amos was not born into a family of prophets. Why did he become a prophet?

Does Paul emphasize what we should do for God, or what God has done for us? What are some of the things he mentioned that God has done?

Verse to Remember: Ephesians 1:7

Why did we become God's children? Who took the initiative to bring this about? (see especially verses 4, 5, 11)

The Old Testament Reading: Amos 7:7-15

7 This is what he showed me: The Lord was standing by a wall that had been built true to plumb, with a plumb line in his hand. 8 And the Lord asked me, "What do you see, Amos?"

"A plumb line," I replied.

Then the Lord said, "Look, I am setting a plumb line among my people Israel; I will spare them no longer.

9 "The high places of Isaac will be destroyed and the sanctuaries of Israel will be ruined; with my sword I will rise against the house of Jeroboam."

10 Then Amaziah the priest of Bethel sent a message to Jeroboam king of Israel: "Amos is raising a conspiracy against you in the very heart of Israel. The land cannot bear all his words. 11 For this is what Amos is saying:

"Jeroboam will die by the sword, and Israel will surely go into exile, away from their native land."

12 Then Amaziah said to Amos, "Get out, you seer! Go back to the land of Judah. Earn your bread there and do your prophesying there. 13 Don't prophesy anymore at Bethel, because this is the king's sanctuary and the temple of the kingdom."

14 Amos answered Amaziah, "I was neither a prophet nor the son of a prophet, but I was a shepherd, and I also took care of sycamore-fig trees.

15 But the Lord took me from tending the flock and said to me, 'Go, prophesy to my people Israel.'

The Epistle: Ephesians 1:3-14

3 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. 4

For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love 5 he predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will— 6 to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves. 7 In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace 8 that he lavished on us.

With all wisdom and understanding, 9 he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, 10 to be put into effect when the times reach their fulfillment—to bring unity to all things in heaven and on earth under Christ.

11 In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will, 12 in order that we, who were the first to put our hope in Christ, might be for the praise of his glory. 13 And you also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation. When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, 14 who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession—to the praise of his glory.

The Psalm: Psalm 85:8-13

I will listen to what God the Lord says;
he promises peace to his people, his faithful servants—
but let them not turn to folly.

9 Surely his salvation is near those who fear him,
that his glory may dwell in our land.

10 Love and faithfulness meet together;
righteousness and peace kiss each other.

11 Faithfulness springs forth from the earth,
and righteousness looks down from heaven.

12 The Lord will indeed give what is good,
and our land will yield its harvest.

13 Righteousness goes before him
and prepares the way for his steps.



Notes, Thoughts, Questions

Christian liturgical usage has often employed this psalm in the Christmas season. What about this psalm makes this appropriate?

These verses of this psalm assure us that God will bless His people because of His steadfast love. As you re-read these verses, what comfort and peace do these words give to you?

Notes, Thoughts, Questions

Read Romans 8:31-39 (one of the texts this hymn is based on) as you meditate on the words of this hymn. How does the hymn writer, Paul Gerhardt, poetically reflect the truths found in that passage?

The Hymn: If God Himself Be for Me *LSB 724*

If God Himself be for me,
I may a host defy;
For when I pray, before me
My foes, confounded, fly.
If Christ, my head and master,
Befriend me from above,
What foe or what disaster
Can drive me from His love?

I build on this foundation,
That Jesus and His blood
Alone are my salvation,
My true, eternal good.
Without Him all that pleases
Is valueless on earth;
The gifts I have from Jesus
Alone have priceless worth.

Christ Jesus is my splendor,
My sun, my light, alone;
Were He not my defender
Before God's judgment throne,
I never should find favor
And mercy in His sight,
But be destroyed forever
As darkness by the light.

He canceled my offenses,
Delivered me from death;
He is the Lord who cleanses
My soul from sin through faith.
In Him I can be cheerful,
Courageous on my way;
In Him I am not fearful
Of God's great Judgment Day.

For no one can condemn me
Or set my hope aside;
Now hell no more can claim me:
Its fury I deride.
No sentence now reproves me,
No guilt destroys my peace;
For Christ, my Savior, loves me
And shields me with His grace.

Who clings with resolution
To Him whom Satan hates
Must look for persecution;
For him the burden waits
Of mock'ry, shame, and losses
Heaped on his blameless
head;
A thousand plagues and
crosses
Will be his daily bread.

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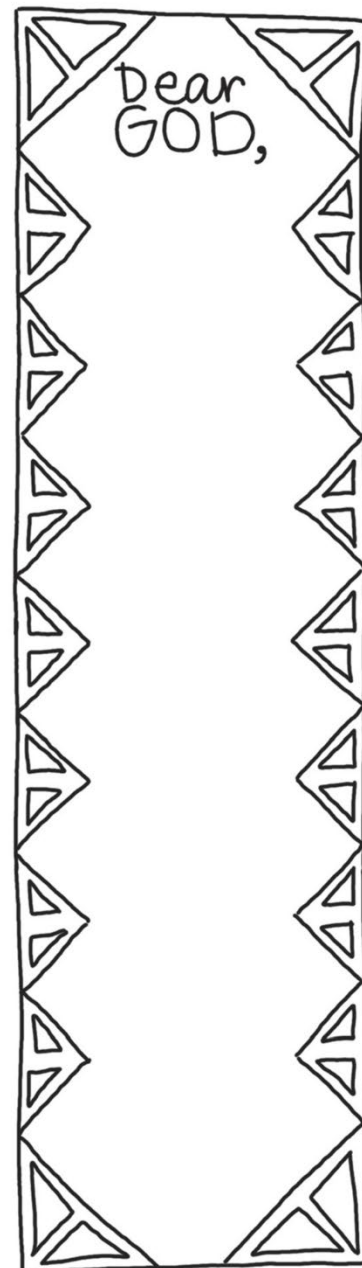
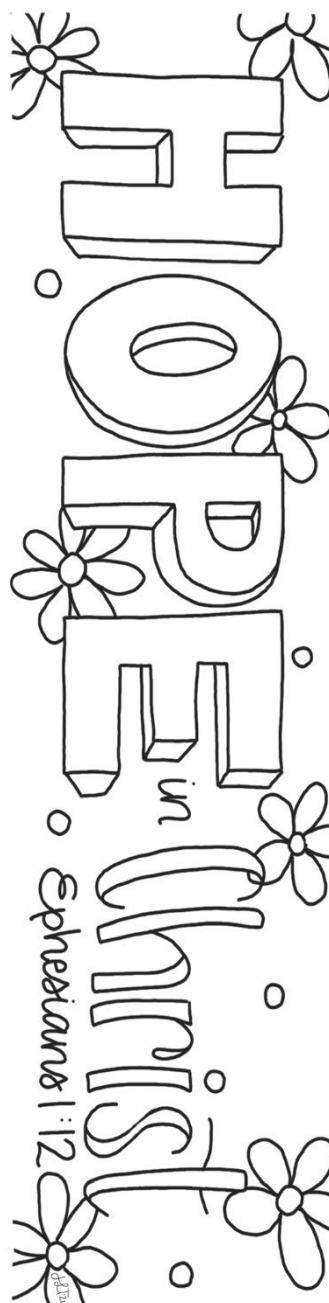
Faith + Life Connections

John the Baptist was a messenger for God. He told people how God wanted them to live. He told them to be sorry for their sins. But most of all, he told them that Jesus, the Savior had come. You can be a messenger for God too! Who can you tell about Jesus this week? *Mark*

God chose Amos to be His prophet to warn His people to stop sinning. But they didn't want to listen to him! They wanted to listen to a false prophet who told them it was ok to keep sinning against God. God gives us people to tell us what is right and what is wrong. Why should we listen to them? *Amos 7:7-15*

It feels great to be chosen, doesn't it? We like to be chosen for a team, or to be a friend, or to go first. Did you know God has chosen you? He chose you to be His very own child. Why? Because He loves you! *Ephesians 1:3-14*

Memorize:
In [Christ] we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace.
Ephesians 1:7



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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

July 15–July 20, 2024

This devotional material is based on Bible readings for Sunday, July 21.

Proper 11

The Gospel: Mark 6:30–44

30 The apostles gathered around Jesus and reported to him all they had done and taught. 31 Then, because so many people were coming and going that they did not even have a chance to eat, he said to them, “Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest.” 32 So they went away by themselves in a boat to a solitary place. 33 But many who saw them leaving recognized them and ran on foot from all the towns and got there ahead of them. 34 When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. So he began teaching them many things. 35 By this time it was late in the day, so his disciples came to him. “This is a remote place,” they said, “and it’s already very late. 36 Send the people away so that they can go to the surrounding countryside and villages and buy themselves something to eat.” 37 But he answered, “You give them something to eat.” They said to him, “That would take more than half a year’s wages! Are we to go and spend that much on bread and give it to them to eat?” 38 “How many loaves do you have?” he asked. “Go and see.” When they found out, they said, “Five—and two fish.” 39 Then Jesus directed them to have all the people sit down in groups on the green grass. 40 So they sat down in groups of hundreds and fifties. 41 Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to his disciples to distribute to the people. He also divided the two fish among them all. 42 They all ate and were satisfied, 43 and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces of bread and fish. 44 The number of the men who had eaten was five thousand.

Devotion on the Gospel

Imagine the scene. Jesus and His disciples land at the beach and are greeted by a huge crowd. Later that day Jesus will miraculously feed 5,000 men, plus women and children. That crowd could easily have been near 10,000 people, if not more!

10,000 people with eager, expectant faces. 10,000 people with hurts and pains and sickness and worries. And the Bible says that Jesus—tired Jesus, worn out Jesus, exhausted Jesus—had compassion on them. He doesn’t hide or run away. He doesn’t explain to them how badly He needs a day off. He doesn’t push the boat out and set sail for another location. Jesus had compassion on them.

The disciples, however, they did not always have a whole lot of compassion. Remember what they said when they saw the crowds? “Send them away!” That’s what they said. “We don’t have time. We don’t have money. We’re tired. We need rest.” And they detached themselves from the crowds. They wanted nothing to do with them. They opted out of helping.

But when you look at Jesus, you see something different. The disciples say, “Send them away.” But Jesus goes and ministers to the people. I can’t send them away, He says, They’re harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.

You and me too! Harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. But Jesus comes and He says: I am the Good Shepherd. I will be your Shepherd. I will lead. I will guide. I will love. And not only does the Good Shepherd provide food for the sheep, but He even gives up His life for the sheep. He goes to the cross. He suffers and dies there. He forgives His sheep. He wins salvation for the sheep. He gives His sheep the gift of heaven. All because of the Good Shepherd’s great compassion for His sheep.

Notes, Thoughts, Questions

What assurance do we find for our own lives in Jesus’ compassionate ministry?

When problems threaten us and needs overwhelm our resources, what is our reaction? Where do we turn? As this story makes clear, where should we turn? And why?

Notes, Thoughts, Questions

Without good leaders ("shepherds"), what happens to God's people ("sheep")? Why? (see Jeremiah 23:2,4)

Jeremiah describes the One who will gather God's people. What titles does Jeremiah use to describe Him? (Jeremiah 23:5-6) What is the significance of these titles?

A key phrase in this passage is "in Christ" (or "in Him"), which appears six times here in this passage. What six things happen "in" (or through) Him?

What are the characteristics of the Church as God's holy temple? (see especially Ephesians 2:19-22)

The Old Testament Reading: Jeremiah 23:1-6

"Woe to the shepherds who are destroying and scattering the sheep of my pasture!" declares the Lord. 2 Therefore this is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says to the shepherds who tend my people: "Because you have scattered my flock and driven them away and have not bestowed care on them, I will bestow punishment on you for the evil you have done," declares the Lord. 3 "I myself will gather the remnant of my flock out of all the countries where I have driven them and will bring them back to their pasture, where they will be fruitful and increase in number. 4 I will place shepherds over them who will tend them, and they will no longer be afraid or terrified, nor will any be missing," declares the Lord.

5 "The days are coming," declares the Lord,
"when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch,
a King who will reign wisely
and do what is just and right in the land.
6 In his days Judah will be saved
and Israel will live in safety.
This is the name by which he will be called:
The Lord Our Righteous Savior.

The Epistle: Ephesians 2:11-22

11 Therefore, remember that formerly you who are Gentiles by birth and called "uncircumcised" by those who call themselves "the circumcision" (which is done in the body by human hands)— 12 remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world. 13 But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

14 For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, 15 by setting aside in his flesh the law with its commands and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new humanity out of the two, thus making peace, 16 and in one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility. 17 He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near. 18 For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit.

19 Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God's people and also members of his household, 20 built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. 21 In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. 22 And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.

The Psalm: Psalm 23

The Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing.

2 He makes me lie down in green pastures,
he leads me beside quiet waters,

3 he refreshes my soul.

He guides me along the right paths
for his name's sake.

4 Even though I walk
through the darkest valley,

I will fear no evil,
for you are with me;
your rod and your staff,
they comfort me.

5 You prepare a table before me
in the presence of my enemies.

You anoint my head with oil;
my cup overflows.



6 Surely your goodness and love will follow me
all the days of my life,
and I will dwell in the house of the Lord
forever.

Notes, Thoughts, Questions

Verse to Remember:
Psalm 23:1-3

Memorize Psalm 23
and recite it each day
this week.

How does Psalm 23
relate with the other
readings for this
weekend?

BUT NOW IN
CHRIST Jesus
 you who
once were
← far off
have been brought
NEAR by the
 **BLOOD** OF
CHRIST.
Ephesians 2:13

Notes, Thoughts, Questions

Think about or discuss how this hymn echos so powerfully and poetically the words of our Lord Jesus Christ when he prays in John 17:21.

The Hymn: The Church's One Foundation *LSB 644*

The Church's one foundation
Is Jesus Christ, her Lord;
She is His new creation
By water and the Word.
From heav'n He came and sought her
To be His holy bride;
With His own blood He bought her,
And for her life He died.

Elect from ev'ry nation,
Yet one o'er all the earth;
Her charter of salvation:
One Lord, one faith, one birth.
One holy name she blesses,
Partakes one holy food,
And to one hope she presses
With ev'ry grace endued.

Though with a scornful wonder
The world sees her oppressed,
By schisms rent asunder,
By heresies distressed,
Yet saints their watch are keeping;
Their cry goes up, "How long?"
And soon the night of weeping
Shall be the morn of song.

Through toil and tribulation
And tumult of her war
She waits the consummation
Of peace forevermore
Till with the vision glorious
Her longing eyes are blest,
And the great Church victorious
Shall be the Church at rest.

Yet she on earth has union
With God, the Three in One,
And mystic sweet communion
With those whose rest is won.
O blessèd heav'nly chorus!
Lord, save us by Your grace
That we, like saints before us,
May see You face to face.

Faith + Life Connections

Think about a time when you were really hungry. What did you do? You probably asked your parents for some food, right? You knew they could help you. Who else helps us? Jesus. Everything we need comes from Him, including forgiveness of our sins!

Mark 6:30-44

Jeremiah is another man God chose to be His prophet, to speak His words to the people. Through Jeremiah, God promised that He would send a good shepherd to care for His sheep (we are His sheep!) Can you guess who that good shepherd is? Yes, Jesus! He is "The Lord Our Righteous Savior." *Jeremiah*

It's lonely to be an outsider, not part of the group. God gathers people from many different nations to become one family through faith in Jesus. Together, we are the Church, and Jesus is our foundation! *Ephesians 2:11-22*

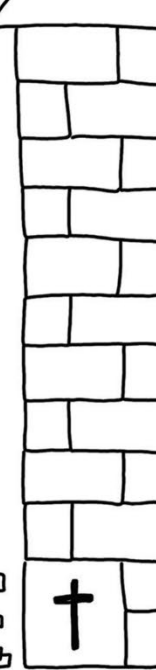
Memorize:

The Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing. He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, he refreshes my soul. Psalm 23:1-3

CHRIST
Jesus
himself

being

the
CORNER
STONE



EPHESIANS 2:20

DEAR
God,

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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

July 22–July 27, 2024

This devotional material is based on Bible readings for Sunday, July 28.

Proper 12

The Gospel: Mark 6:45–56

45 Immediately Jesus made his disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of him to Bethsaida, while he dismissed the crowd. 46 After leaving them, he went up on a mountainside to pray.

47 Later that night, the boat was in the middle of the lake, and he was alone on land. 48 He saw the disciples straining at the oars, because the wind was against them. Shortly before dawn he went out to them, walking on the lake. He was about to pass by them, 49 but when they saw him walking on the lake, they thought he was a ghost. They cried out, 50 because they all saw him and were terrified.

Immediately he spoke to them and said, “Take courage! It is I. Don’t be afraid.” 51 Then he climbed into the boat with them, and the wind died down. They were completely amazed, 52 for they had not understood about the loaves; their hearts were hardened.

53 When they had crossed over, they landed at Gennesaret and anchored there.

54 As soon as they got out of the boat, people recognized Jesus. 55 They ran throughout that whole region and carried the sick on mats to wherever they heard he was. 56 And wherever he went—into villages, towns or countryside—they placed the sick in the marketplaces. They begged him to let them touch even the edge of his cloak, and all who touched it were healed.

Devotion on the Gospel

Doubt and disbelief—those two dreadful “D’s” are on full display in this text from St. Mark. The disciples are having a difficult time in the boat. They are trying to get to the other side of the lake, but the wind is against them and they aren’t getting anywhere fast. It’s the middle of the night. And that’s when they see something . . . out on the lake . . . coming toward them! “It’s a ghost!” someone screams. And that’s when, in their fear, those two dreadful D’s rear their ugly heads: doubt and disbelief.

It’s no ghost! We know the story. That’s Jesus coming to them, walking on the water. What a beautiful, awesome, fantastic moment! But the disciples don’t see it that way. They are terrified with a false fear and instead are filled with doubt and disbelief.

Until Jesus calls out, “Take courage! It is I. Don’t be afraid!” He climbs into the boat with them, and the wind dies down, and they were completely amazed—and filled with joy, relief, and wonder too!

We too tend to give in to those two dreadful D’s, doubt and disbelief. And when we do, just like the disciples, we live a life terrified by the circumstances around us. What does Jesus do in the midst of our fear? When we are stuck in doubt and disbelief, he walks into our lives and calls out: “Take courage! It is I. Don’t be afraid!”

He transforms us from fear to faith. He moves us from doubt to abiding trust in Him. He changes us from being stuck in disbelief to a beautiful confession of faith: My Lord and my God! And we are completely amazed by Him—and filled with joy, relief, and wonder.

Notes, Thoughts, Questions

Why did Jesus need some time alone for prayer? (see John 6:15)

What do Jesus’ words and His walking on the water show? (see Isaiah 41:10, 13; Job 9:8; Psalm 77:19)

Notes, Thoughts, Questions

This "Noahic Covenant" is God's promise never to destroy all creation with a natural catastrophe. Look up other major covenants God made with his people (Genesis 15:9-21; Genesis 17; Exodus 19-24; 2 Samuel 7:5-16; Jeremiah 31:31-34)

After the flood, the rainbow took on new meaning as a sign of God's covenant with His people. Why is this special to us even today?

How does our heavenly Father strengthen the whole family of Christ for the growth that He desires?

Paul prayed that the Ephesians would be "rooted and grounded in love." "Rooted" points to living things that send their roots deep into the soil to gain nourishment for life. "Grounded" refers to having a good, solid foundation on which to build. How are both metaphors significant for us as

The Old Testament Reading: Genesis 9:8-17

8 Then God said to Noah and to his sons with him: 9 "I now establish my covenant with you and with your descendants after you 10 and with every living creature that was with you—the birds, the livestock and all the wild animals, all those that came out of the ark with you—every living creature on earth. 11 I establish my covenant with you: Never again will all life be destroyed by the waters of a flood; never again will there be a flood to destroy the earth."

12 And God said, "This is the sign of the covenant I am making between me and you and every living creature with you, a covenant for all generations to come: 13 I have set my rainbow in the clouds, and it will be the sign of the covenant between me and the earth. 14 Whenever I bring clouds over the earth and the rainbow appears in the clouds, 15 I will remember my covenant between me and you and all living creatures of every kind. Never again will the waters become a flood to destroy all life. 16 Whenever the rainbow appears in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and all living creatures of every kind on the earth."

17 So God said to Noah, "This is the sign of the covenant I have established between me and all life on the earth."

Whenever the rainbow appears in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and all living creatures of every kind on the earth.

The Epistle: Ephesians 3:14-21

14 For this reason I kneel before the Father, 15 from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name. 16 I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, 17 so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, 18 may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, 19 and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

20 Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, 21 to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.

The Psalm: Psalm 136:1-9

Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good.

His love endures forever.

2 Give thanks to the God of gods.

His love endures forever.

3 Give thanks to the Lord of lords:

His love endures forever.

4 to him who alone does great wonders,

His love endures forever.

5 who by his understanding made the heavens,

His love endures forever.

6 who spread out the earth upon the waters,

His love endures forever.

7 who made the great lights—

His love endures forever.

8 the sun to govern the day,

His love endures forever.

9 the moon and stars to govern the night;

His love endures forever.

Notes, Thoughts, Questions

Verse to Remember:
Psalm 136:1

This psalm is a liturgy of praise to the Lord as our Creator and Redeemer. Pray the psalm by yourself or together with your family.

Why is the phrase "His love endures forever" repeated so very often (26 times!) in this psalm?

HIS STEADFAST
Love
ENDURES FOREVER

Notes, Thoughts, Questions

The author of this hymn, Rev. Edward Hopper, was the pastor of the Church of Sea and Land in New York City, a church especially attended by sailors.

How do the images of the sea and sailing (and God's watchful and protecting hand) fit the experiences of the life of the Christian?

The Hymn: Jesus, Savior, Pilot Me *LSB 715*

Jesus, Savior, pilot me
Over life's tempestuous sea;
 Unknown waves before me roll,
 Hiding rock and treach'rous shoal.
Chart and compass come from Thee.
Jesus, Savior, pilot me.

As a mother stills her child,
Thou canst hush the ocean wild;
 Boist'rous waves obey Thy will
 When Thou say'st to them, "Be still!"
Wondrous Sov'reign of the sea,
Jesus, Savior, pilot me.

When at last I near the shore
And the fearful breakers roar
 Twixt me and the peaceful rest,
 Then, while leaning on Thy breast,
May I hear Thee say to me,
"Fear not, I will pilot thee."

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Faith + Life Connections

What makes you afraid?
Spiders? Heights? The dark?
Jesus' disciples were afraid.
They were in a boat in a
stormy sea at night, and they
saw something coming
toward them on the water!
"Don't be afraid!" a voice
called out. It was Jesus! Jesus
says the same to us: Don't be
afraid! I am with you.

Mark 6:45-56

When people make a
promise, they sometimes seal
it with a handshake, or write it
on paper and sign it. After the
flood, when God promised to
never again destroy the earth,
but to care for His creation
always, He sealed it with a
beautiful sign: a rainbow.

Genesis 9:8-17

How deep is the ocean? How
tall is the tallest mountain?
How far is it from one side of
the world to the other? How
high is it to the stars? God's
love for you is deeper, taller,
wider, and higher than all of
those! *Ephesians 3:14-21*

Memorize:

Give thanks to the Lord, for
he is good. His love endures
forever.

Psalms 136:1



Dear God
Thank you,



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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.

