

Walking Together in the Word

Devotions on the Weekly Scripture Readings for November 2023

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

October 30–November 4, 2023

*This devotional material is based on Bible readings for Sunday, November 5.
All Saints' Day*

The Gospel: Matthew 5:1-12

Now when Jesus saw the crowds, he went up on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to him, 2 and he began to teach them. He said:

3 "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

4 Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

5 Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

6 Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,
for they will be filled.

7 Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.

8 Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

9 Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

10 Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

11 "Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. 12 Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Devotion on the Gospel

Each year, the first Sunday in November is set aside in the church to remember all the saints who are now with the Savior in heaven - and particularly those who have died in the Lord since last All Saints' Day. Every year there is a list of 20, 30, sometimes even 40 names. Husbands, wives, family members, loved ones, friends. Grief is real.

What a blessing God gives in this Gospel reading! What grace Jesus gives in His words: "Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted."

Blessed? Even when faced with the tears and grief and pain that death brings?

Yes! Because we are blessed with salvation! We have the promise that Jesus conquered death for all, and His victory is our victory.

Blessed? Yes! Because we are blessed with Baptism. It is through that miraculous washing that we are made members of His body and partakers with Him in His death, His burial, and His resurrection.

Blessed? Yes! Because we are blessed with the promise of the resurrection to new life and the joyous promise of eternal life. Because Jesus lives, we too will live!

Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted. Yes! As the Psalmist sings: "Those who sow with tears will reap with songs of joy. Those who go out weeping...will return with songs of joy."

Notes, Thoughts, Questions

This section of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount is called "The Beatitudes" - pronouncements of blessings for Jesus' disciples. What Jesus says about those who are blessed by God likely surprised and shocked those who heard it. What is surprising or shocking for you? What gives you peace and comfort?

Jesus' words call us to gaze forward to the time when God's promises will be fulfilled. Describe the encouragement and strength this passage gives, especially as we celebrate All Saints' Day.

Notes, Thoughts, Questions

Read Genesis 15:1–6. How is God's promise to Abraham fulfilled in this company before the throne?

What is the significance of the white robes and palms? (see John 12:12-13)

The First Reading: Revelation 7:9–17

After this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. 10 And they cried out in a loud voice: “Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb.”

11 All the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures. They fell down on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, 12 saying:

“Amen!

Praise and glory

and wisdom and thanks and honor

and power and strength

be to our God for ever and ever.

Amen!”

13 Then one of the elders asked me, “These in white robes—who are they, and where did they come from?”

14 I answered, “Sir, you know.”

And he said, “These are they who have come out of the great tribulation; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. 15 Therefore,

“they are before the throne of God

and serve him day and night in his temple;

and he who sits on the throne

will shelter them with his presence.

16 ‘Never again will they hunger;

never again will they thirst.

The sun will not beat down on them,’

nor any scorching heat.

17 For the Lamb at the center of the throne

will be their shepherd;

‘he will lead them to springs of living water.’

‘And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.’”

The Epistle: 1 John 3:1-3

See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. 2 Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when Christ appears,[a] we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. 3 All who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure.

*See what great love the Father
has lavished on us, that we
should be called children of God!
And that is what we are!*

The Psalm: Psalm 149

Praise the Lord.

Sing to the Lord a new song,
his praise in the assembly of his faithful people.
2 Let Israel rejoice in their Maker;
let the people of Zion be glad in their King.
3 Let them praise his name with dancing
and make music to him with timbrel and harp.
4 For the Lord takes delight in his people;
he crowns the humble with victory.
5 Let his faithful people rejoice in this honor
and sing for joy on their beds.
6 May the praise of God be in their mouths
and a double-edged sword in their hands,
7 to inflict vengeance on the nations
and punishment on the peoples,
8 to bind their kings with fetters,
their nobles with shackles of iron,
9 to carry out the sentence written against them—
this is the glory of all his faithful people.
Praise the Lord.

Notes, Thoughts, Questions

Verse to Remember:
1 John 3:1

*Why is it a comfort
and blessing to be
called the "children of
God?" (See John
1:12-13)*

*The hope that John
describes in this
passage is more than
mere wish. Why is
the Christian hope an
unshakable
confidence
concerning our
future? (see Romans
5:1-5)*

*In praise of our God,
the psalmist
encourages us to sing
a "new song." What is
special about a "new"
song? (see Ps. 33:3;
40:3; 96:1; 98:1;
144:9)*

*What is the reason
that God's people are
called to sing and
praise? What are we
responding to as we
sing our praise to
God? (see v. 4)*

Notes,
Thoughts,
Questions

This hymn is a wonderful vision of Christians participating in the marriage feast of the Lamb. Reread the text of the hymn and underline the blessings of the saints that they enjoy in the glories of heaven.

The Hymn: Behold a Host, Arrayed in White

LSB 676

Behold a host, arrayed in white,
Like thousand snow-clad mountains bright!

With palms they stand;

Who is this band

Before the throne of light?

These are the saints of glorious fame,

Who from the great affliction came

And in the flood

Of Jesus' blood

Are cleansed from guilt and shame.

They now serve God both day and night;

They sing their songs in endless light.

Their anthems ring

As they all sing

With angels shining bright.

Despised and scorned, they sojourned here;

But now, how glorious they appear!

Those martyrs stand,

A priestly band,

God's throne forever near.

On earth they wept through bitter years;

Now God has wiped away their tears,

Transformed their strife

To heav'nly life,

And freed them from their fears.

They now enjoy the Sabbath rest,

The heav'nly banquet of the blest;

The Lamb, their Lord,

At festive board

Himself is host and guest.

O blessèd saints in bright array

Now safely home in endless day,

Extol the Lord,

Who with His Word

Sustained you on the way.

The steep and narrow path you trod;

You toiled and sowed the Word abroad;

Rejoice and bring

Your fruits and sing

Before the throne of God.

The myriad angels raise their song;

O saints, sing with that happy throng!

Lift up one voice;

Let heav'n rejoice

In our Redeemer's song!

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Faith + Life Connections

Name some blessings God has given you. Family, home, food, toys . . . those are some of the things we call blessings. But Jesus says that we are also blessed when we are sad or when we make peace with others, or when people are mean to us because we believe in Him. Why? Because your greatest blessing is that Jesus loves you, forgives you, and has made you His child. Earthly blessings come and go, but you are His forever!

Matthew 5:1-12

Have you ever tried to count the stars? There are too many to count! That's how many believers in Jesus will be in heaven one day. How awesome that will be!

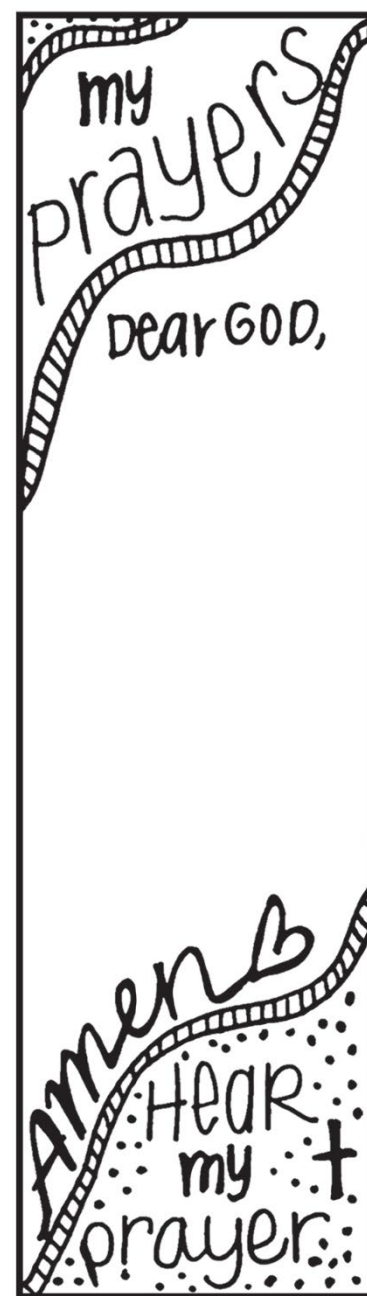
Revelation 7:9-17

Who do you belong to? Your mom, dad, grandma, aunt, caregiver? They say, "You are mine, I love you!" Do you know whose else you are? You are God's child! God says, "You are mine! I love you!"

1 John 3:1-3

Bible Verse to Memorize:

See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! 1 John 3:1



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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

November 6–November 11, 2023

*This devotional material is based on Bible readings for Sunday, November 12.
Proper 27*

The Gospel: Matthew 25:1-13

“At that time the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. 2 Five of them were foolish and five were wise. 3 The foolish ones took their lamps but did not take any oil with them. 4 The wise ones, however, took oil in jars along with their lamps. 5 The bridegroom was a long time in coming, and they all became drowsy and fell asleep.

6 “At midnight the cry rang out: ‘Here’s the bridegroom! Come out to meet him!’

7 “Then all the virgins woke up and trimmed their lamps. 8 The foolish ones said to the wise, ‘Give us some of your oil; our lamps are going out.’

9 “No,’ they replied, ‘there may not be enough for both us and you. Instead, go to those who sell oil and buy some for yourselves.’

10 “But while they were on their way to buy the oil, the bridegroom arrived. The virgins who were ready went in with him to the wedding banquet. And the door was shut.

11 “Later the others also came. ‘Lord, Lord,’ they said, ‘open the door for us!’

12 “But he replied, ‘Truly I tell you, I don’t know you.’

13 “Therefore keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour.

Devotion on the Gospel

We’re getting to that time of the church year when we talk about Jesus coming again. And how do we know when He’s going to come? Well, we don’t! The Bible is very clear that Jesus will be coming again in power and glory, but in no uncertain terms God says that no one knows the day or the hour when He will return.

Jesus does not talk about when He will return, but He does talk about being prepared for that day. You can almost hear Him asking the question in this text: Are you prepared? Are you ready? Are you ready for my return, for my coming in glory, for the end of days? Are you ready? Is your lamp with you? Is it trimmed and filled with oil? Are you prepared?

If you confess that Jesus is your Lord and Savior, you are. Not hard, is it? Doesn’t require a sheet of detailed instructions, does it? No, because it’s all about God’s grace - that grace that even empowers us through the Holy Spirit to believe in the first place!

He gets us ready through the Gospel. He prepares us by the Spirit working on our hearts. He cleanses us from sin. He washes us clean in the blood of the Lamb. He puts on us the robes of righteousness. Why? So we can be ready for the wedding feast! So we can be ready for when He comes again! So we can celebrate with Him forever in heaven!

Notes, Thoughts, Questions

Jesus describes foolish and wise virgins (bridesmaids) in this parable. What contrasts do you see between the foolish and the wise virgins?

This parable calls us to preparation, expectation, and perseverance. In what specific ways does our God prepare us for the second coming of Christ?

Notes, Thoughts, Questions

The Lord is clear that His judgment is real for the unfaithful and unbeliever. How do the two parables in v. 19 teach the inescapability of God's judgment?

Why did the Lord detest the feasts and offerings of the Israelites at worship? (see 1 Samuel 15:22)

Why does St. Paul write that we do not grieve like "the rest of men, who have no hope?" What gives the Christian hope, even in the face of death?

*Verse to Remember:
1 Thessalonians 4:14*

Paul shares in vv. 16-18 a number of "events" that will happen at the second coming of Christ. Underline the events that will occur on that day. What encourages and comforts you in these words?

The Old Testament Reading: Amos 5:18-24

Woe to you who long
for the day of the Lord!

Why do you long for the day of the Lord?

That day will be darkness, not light.

19 It will be as though a man fled from a lion

only to meet a bear,

as though he entered his house

and rested his hand on the wall

only to have a snake bite him.

20 Will not the day of the Lord be darkness, not light—
pitch-dark, without a ray of brightness?

21 "I hate, I despise your religious festivals;

your assemblies are a stench to me.

22 Even though you bring me burnt offerings and grain offerings,

I will not accept them.

Though you bring choice fellowship offerings,

I will have no regard for them.

23 Away with the noise of your songs!

I will not listen to the music of your harps.

24 But let justice roll on like a river,

righteousness like a never-failing stream!

The Epistle: 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

13 Brothers and sisters, we do not want you to be uninformed about those who sleep in death, so that you do not grieve like the rest of mankind, who have no hope. 14 For we believe that Jesus died and rose again, and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him.

15 According to the Lord's word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. 16 For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. 17 After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever.

18 Therefore encourage one another with these words.

The Psalm: Psalm 70

Hasten, O God, to save me;
come quickly, Lord, to help me.
2 May those who want to take my life
be put to shame and confusion;
may all who desire my ruin
be turned back in disgrace.
3 May those who say to me, "Aha! Aha!"
turn back because of their shame.
4 But may all who seek you
rejoice and be glad in you;
may those who long for your saving help always say,
"The Lord is great!"
5 But as for me, I am poor and needy;
come quickly to me, O God.
You are my help and my deliverer;
Lord, do not delay.

*May all who seek You
rejoice and be glad in You;
may those who long for Your
saving help always say,
"The Lord is great!"*

Notes, Thoughts, Questions

It is clear that the psalmist is in serious trouble and he is calling on God to help him quickly. This psalm is a good reminder for us to call on the Lord, for He is our help. "Have we trials and temptations? Is there trouble anywhere? We should never be discouraged. Take it to the Lord in prayer."

How does God answer the psalmist's (and our) prayer as we ask Him to come and help? (see Revelation 22:20)

Notes,
Thoughts,
Questions

The tune of this hymn is known as the "king of chorales." The best known setting is J.S. Bach's Cantata 140, Wachet auf, composed in 1731. Look up Wachet auf on YouTube and listen as you read the words of the hymn.

The Hymn: Wake, Awake, for Night Is Flying

LSB 516

"Wake, awake, for night is flying,"
The watchmen on the heights are crying;
 "Awake, Jerusalem, arise!"
Midnight hears the welcome voices
And at the thrilling cry rejoices:
 "Oh, where are ye, ye virgins wise?
The Bridegroom comes, awake!
Your lamps with gladness take!
 Alleluia!
With bridal care
Yourselves prepare
To meet the Bridegroom, who is near."

Zion hears the watchmen singing,
And all her heart with joy is springing;
 She wakes, she rises from her gloom.
For her Lord comes down all-glorious,
The strong in grace, in truth victorious;
 Her star is ris'n, her light is come.
Now come, Thou Blessèd One,
Lord Jesus, God's own Son,
 Hail! Hosanna!
We enter all
The wedding hall
To eat the Supper at Thy call.

Now let all the heav'ns adore Thee,
Let saints and angels sing before Thee
 With harp and cymbals' clearest tone.
Of one pearl each shining portal,
Where, joining with the choir immortal,
 We gather round Thy radiant throne.
No eye has seen the light,
No ear has heard the might
 Of Thy glory;
Therefore will we
Eternally
Sing hymns of praise and joy to Thee!

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Faith + Life Connections

Jesus told a story waiting and being ready. Jesus wants us to be ready when He comes to take us to heaven. How do we get ready? Jesus makes it simple: you believe in Jesus as your Savior. Do you believe in Jesus? Then you are ready! But we might have to wait awhile, so Jesus tell us to stay ready. How can you keep being ready? (Hint: it has to do with God's Word.)

Matthew 25:1-13

Because of sin in the world, people die. That makes us sad. We miss them! But one day, when Jesus returns, all believers will rise and live together with us and Jesus in heaven forever! What a wonderful day that will be!

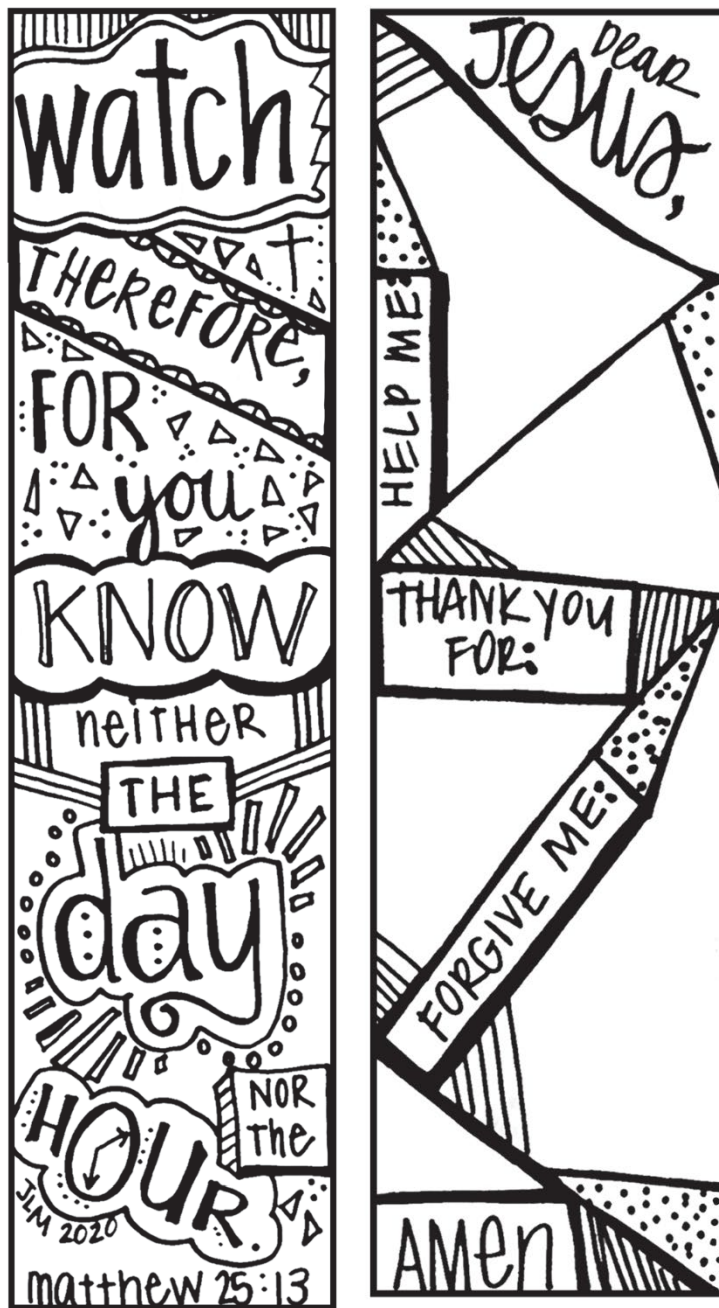
1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

Who do you go to when you need help? The psalmist called out to God. We can too! What are some words from the psalm that you can pray when you need help?

Psalm 70

Memorize:

For we believe that Jesus died and rose again, and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him. 1 Thessalonians 4:14



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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

November 13–November 18, 2023

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

Proper 28

The Gospel: Matthew 25:14–30

“Again, it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted his wealth to them. 15 To one he gave five bags of gold, to another two bags, and to another one bag,[a] each according to his ability. Then he went on his journey. 16 The man who had received five bags of gold went at once and put his money to work and gained five bags more. 17 So also, the one with two bags of gold gained two more. 18 But the man who had received one bag went off, dug a hole in the ground and hid his master’s money. 19 “After a long time the master of those servants returned and settled accounts with them. 20 The man who had received five bags of gold brought the other five. ‘Master,’ he said, ‘you entrusted me with five bags of gold. See, I have gained five more.’ 21 “His master replied, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s happiness!’

22 “The man with two bags of gold also came. ‘Master,’ he said, ‘you entrusted me with two bags of gold; see, I have gained two more.’ 23 “His master replied, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s happiness!’ 24 “Then the man who had received one bag of gold came. ‘Master,’ he said, ‘I knew that you are a hard man, harvesting where you have not sown and gathering where you have not scattered seed. 25 So I was afraid and went out and hid your gold in the ground. See, here is what belongs to you.’ 26 “His master replied, ‘You wicked, lazy servant! So you knew that I harvest where I have not sown and gather where I have not scattered seed? 27 Well then, you should have put my money on deposit with the bankers, so that when I returned I would have received it back with interest.

28 “So take the bag of gold from him and give it to the one who has ten bags. 29 For whoever has will be given more, and they will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what they have will be taken from them. 30 And throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’

Devotion on the Gospel

This is not a complicated parable. God puts His treasure into our hands and He expects us to use it for His glory. God owns, we manage. God gives, we use. God entrusts, we invest. The meaning was clear to His disciples and it’s clear to us. The Kingdom might come tomorrow or in 1000 years, but we don’t just sit back, doing nothing. Use the time wisely. Share the gifts the Master has given you. And be assured that He will see you when He returns.

The Master is coming back. It’s a fact and it’s a promise. He will return as King of kings and Lord of lords. He owns it all. He rules over it all. He will return to reign forever. The Master is coming back - the parable makes that very clear. And He makes it clear that we are to use the gifts that He has entrusted to us to His glory.

Think of the gifts that He has given to you. Your faith in Jesus is a gift. Your Baptism, where He makes you His child, where He forgives your sin, where He promises His presence is a gift. He gives you the Gospel message as a gift. He gives you His body and blood in, with, and under the bread and wine in Holy Communion. And then we think of the material blessings! What gifts!

Gift after gift and blessing upon blessing He gives to us. And He invites us to use those gifts He gives - to His glory and for His people. It’s a privilege to do it! It’s a joy to be His good steward. And it’s a thrill to realize that we are blessed to be a blessing.

Notes, Thoughts, Questions

Think about the gifts that our Master, Jesus, has entrusted to you. List three ways that you can use these gifts to His glory and for the blessing of His people.

Notice that the servants had different gifts. One had five talents, another two, and another one. Each child of God has different gifts and abilities. Think about how it is not the talent of the child of God that matters. What matters is how he or she uses it.

Notes, Thoughts, Questions

This passage is filled with judgment, punishment, and terror at the “Day of the Lord.” Though these words should warn and admonish the disciples of Jesus, why do we have no fear for the Day of the Lord and of the coming judgment?

Compare and contrast this passage, and especially vv. 10-13, to Zephaniah 3:14-17. What hope and comfort does this message of restoration and grace give to you?

The Old Testament Reading: Zephaniah 1:7-16

Be silent before the Sovereign Lord,
for the day of the Lord is near.
The Lord has prepared a sacrifice;
he has consecrated those he has invited.
8 “On the day of the Lord’s sacrifice
I will punish the officials
and the king’s sons
and all those clad
in foreign clothes.
9 On that day I will punish
all who avoid stepping on the threshold,
who fill the temple of their gods
with violence and deceit.
10 “On that day,”
declares the Lord,
“a cry will go up from the Fish Gate,
wailing from the New Quarter,
and a loud crash from the hills.
11 Wail, you who live in the market district;
all your merchants will be wiped out,
all who trade with silver will be destroyed.
12 At that time I will search Jerusalem with lamps
and punish those who are complacent,
who are like wine left on its dregs,
who think, ‘The Lord will do nothing,
either good or bad.’
13 Their wealth will be plundered,
their houses demolished.
Though they build houses,
they will not live in them;
though they plant vineyards,
they will not drink the wine.”
14 The great day of the Lord is near—
near and coming quickly.
The cry on the day of the Lord is bitter;
the Mighty Warrior shouts his battle cry.
15 That day will be a day of wrath—
a day of distress and anguish,
a day of trouble and ruin,
a day of darkness and gloom,
a day of clouds and blackness—
16 a day of trumpet and battle cry
against the fortified cities
and against the corner towers.

The Epistle: 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11

Now, brothers and sisters, about times and dates we do not need to write to you, 2 for you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. 3 While people are saying, "Peace and safety," destruction will come on them suddenly, as labor pains on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape.

4 But you, brothers and sisters, are not in darkness so that this day should surprise you like a thief. 5 You are all children of the light and children of the day. We do not belong to the night or to the darkness. 6 So then, let us not be like others, who are asleep, but let us be awake and sober. 7 For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, get drunk at night. 8 But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, putting on faith and love as a breastplate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet. 9 For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. 10 He died for us so that, whether we are awake or asleep, we may live together with him. 11 Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.

The Psalm: Psalm 90:1-12

Lord, you have been our dwelling place throughout all generations.

2 Before the mountains were born
or you brought forth the whole world,
from everlasting to everlasting you are God.
3 You turn people back to dust,
saying, "Return to dust, you mortals."
4 A thousand years in your sight
are like a day that has just gone by,
or like a watch in the night.
5 Yet you sweep people away in the sleep of death—
they are like the new grass of the morning:
6 In the morning it springs up new,
but by evening it is dry and withered.
7 We are consumed by your anger
and terrified by your indignation.
8 You have set our iniquities before you,
our secret sins in the light of your presence.
9 All our days pass away under your wrath;
we finish our years with a moan.
10 Our days may come to seventy years,
or eighty, if our strength endures;
yet the best of them are but trouble and sorrow,
for they quickly pass, and we fly away.
11 If only we knew the power of your anger!
Your wrath is as great as the fear that is your due.
12 Teach us to number our days,
that we may gain a heart of wisdom.

Notes, Thoughts, Questions

In his writing, Paul often uses the metaphor of putting on armor as he does in verse 8. Read and compare Romans 13:12; 2 Corinthians 6:7; and Ephesians 6:13-17.

Paul describes the arrival of the second coming "as labor pains on a pregnant woman." How is this an appropriate metaphor for the second coming of Christ?

*Verse to Remember:
Psalm 90:1*

This psalm, written by Moses, is an unblinking picture of the dismal state of man before an eternal and holy God. According to verse 10, what two ingredients is our short life full of?

What great lesson is to be learned from this text? (See verse 12.) How can we apply this lesson to our daily life and living?

Notes,
Thoughts,
Questions

The Hymn: Take My Life and Let It Be

LSB 783

Take my life and let it be
Consecrated, Lord, to Thee;
Take my moments and my days,
Let them flow in ceaseless praise.

Take my hands and let them move
At the impulse of Thy love;
Take my feet and let them be
Swift and beautiful for Thee.

Take my voice and let me sing
Always, only for my King;
Take my lips and let them be
Filled with messages from Thee.

Take my silver and my gold,
Not a mite would I withhold;
Take my intellect and use
Ev'ry pow'r as Thou shalt choose.

Take my will and make it Thine,
It shall be no longer mine;
Take my heart, it is Thine own,
It shall be Thy royal throne.

Take my love, my Lord, I pour
At Thy feet its treasure store;
Take myself, and I will be
Ever, only, all for Thee.

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*Read Romans 12:1.
How does the hymn
summarize the truth
of Paul's words from
Romans 12?*

Faith + Life Connections

What are you good at?
Drawing? Making jokes?
Music? Sports? Giving hugs?
God has given us all gifts and
He wants us to use them to
help others and to praise Him.
How will you use the gifts
that God has given you to
share His love this week?

Matthew 25:14-30

Have you seen a picture of a
knight wearing armor for
protection? St. Paul wants us
to put on armor too: "faith
and love as a breastplate, and
the hope of salvation as a
helmet." Talk about how faith
and hope in Jesus protect our
hearts and how the hope of
salvation protects our minds
from the attacks of the devil.

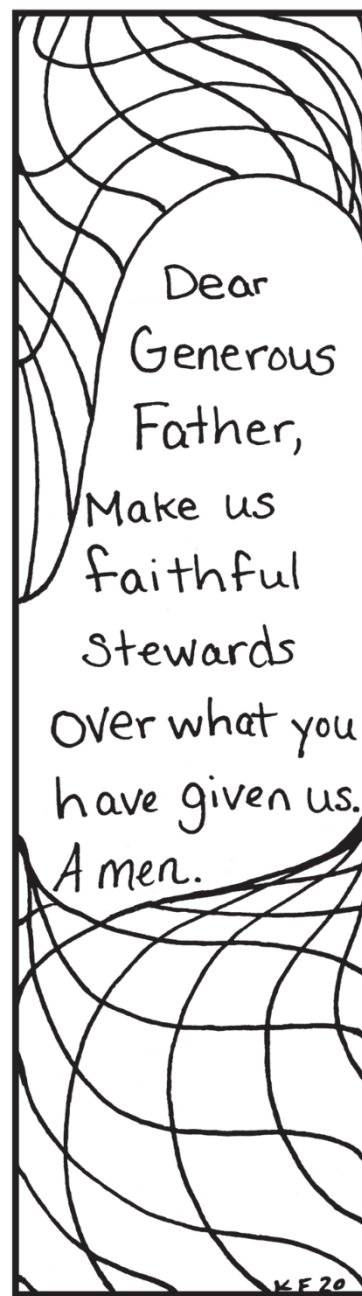
1 Thessalonians 5:1-11

Look at the hymn for this
week. Each verse talks about
a different way that you can
serve God and serve others
with the gifts that God has
given you. Hands, feet, voice,
lips: which will you use today
to glorify God?

Take My Life and Let It Be

Memorize:

Lord, you have been our
dwelling place throughout all
generations.
Psalm 90:1



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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

November 20–November 25, 2023

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

Proper 29

The Gospel: Matthew 25:31–46

“When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his glorious throne. 32 All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. 33 He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left. 34 “Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. 35 For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, 36 I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.’ 37 “Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? 38 When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? 39 When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?’ 40 “The King will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.’ 41 “Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. 42 For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, 43 I was a stranger and you did not invite me in, I needed clothes and you did not clothe me, I was sick and in prison and you did not look after me.’

44 “They also will answer, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you?’ 45 “He will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.’ 46 “Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life.”

Devotion on the Gospel

My fellow sheep... I understand that that’s not a very flattering thing to be called. Sheep are stupid, they’re always thinking about eating, they’re always getting in trouble. But, sheep can be led. As Jesus says: “My sheep hear my voice and they follow me.”

Sheep do some other things. Jesus’ sheep help and feed and serve and provide for others. In fact, Jesus says, when you did this for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did it for me.

What a contrast with the goats! They do none of those things. Jesus said you did not help or feed or serve or provide for others. So, He says, depart from me into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.

My fellow sheep... sheep who are led by the Good Shepherd, sheep who are taken by that Good Shepherd to the green pastures of His Word and Sacrament, sheep who know and believe in and love the Savior.

My fellow sheep... sheep who are led to do the things that Jesus talks about in Matthew 25, sheep who do good works often without even realizing it, sheep whose good works flow from the faith which was created in their hearts by the Holy Spirit.

My fellow sheep... we are little lambs of God, made so by the sacrifice of the Good Shepherd. We are the sheep of His pasture. And we hear and we listen to and we follow Him.

Notes, Thoughts, Questions

How does Jesus’ parable illustrate the Christian’s life of faith and service?

Think about the ministry needs represented in this parable. How does our church care for and help people in some of these circumstances? How can you participate more fully in these ministries?

Notes, Thoughts, Questions

The shepherds of Israel did not fulfill their calling in leading, guiding, and taking care of God's flock. What then will the Lord Himself do for His flock?

In love and care for His people, God established the kingdom of His servant David. What would great David's greater Son (Jesus) do for the sheep? (see John 10:14-16)

This last Sunday in the church year is often referred to as Christ the King Sunday. Paul is clear that Christ reigns as King over all, even death! How is Jesus now reigning in heaven, in the world, in our lives?

The altar at Chapel of the Cross has a Greek inscription on the front which is translated: "Jesus Christ, Victor." How do these verses illustrate the truth of that inscription on the altar?

The Old Testament Reading: Ezekiel 34:11-16, 20-24

11 "For this is what the Sovereign Lord says: I myself will search for my sheep and look after them. 12 As a shepherd looks after his scattered flock when he is with them, so will I look after my sheep. I will rescue them from all the places where they were scattered on a day of clouds and darkness.

13 I will bring them out from the nations and gather them from the countries, and I will bring them into their own land. I will pasture them on the mountains of Israel, in the ravines and in all the settlements in the land.

14 I will tend them in a good pasture, and the mountain heights of Israel will be their grazing land. There they will lie down in good grazing land, and there they will feed in a rich pasture on the mountains of Israel. 15 I myself will tend my sheep and have them lie down, declares the Sovereign Lord.

16 I will search for the lost and bring back the strays. I will bind up the injured and strengthen the weak, but the sleek and the strong I will destroy. I will shepherd the flock with justice.

20 "Therefore this is what the Sovereign Lord says to them: See, I myself will judge between the fat sheep and the lean sheep. 21 Because you shove with flank and shoulder, butting all the weak sheep with your horns until you have driven them away, 22 I will save my flock, and they will no longer be plundered. I will judge between one sheep and another. 23 I will place over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he will tend them; he will tend them and be their shepherd. 24 I the Lord will be their God, and my servant David will be prince among them. I the Lord have spoken.

The Epistle: 1 Corinthians 15:20-28

20 But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. 21 For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. 22 For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. 23 But each in turn: Christ, the firstfruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him. 24 Then the end will come, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power. 25 For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. 26 The last enemy to be destroyed is death. 27 For he "has put everything under his feet." Now when it says that "everything" has been put under him, it is clear that this does not include God himself, who put everything under Christ. 28 When he has done this, then the Son himself will be made subject to him who put everything under him, so that God may be all in all.

The Psalm: Psalm 95:1-7a

- 1 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.

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

Notes, Thoughts, Questions

Verse to Remember:
Psalm 95:1

The Venite from the order of Matins (LSB pp. 220-221) is a canticle which puts these verses to music. Look it up on YouTube and sing along with your hymnal!

This psalm is a call to worship. List the reasons the psalmist gives as to why we worship our God.

Notes, Thoughts, Questions

This song is a wonderful celebration of the promise that believers will someday gather around the throne of God lifting voices in united songs of praise to our heavenly King. Read through the words of this song, then read Revelation 7:9. How does this song echo the truth we read in Revelation?

The Hymn: There Is a Higher Throne

Gettys

There is a higher throne
Than all this world has known,
Where faithful ones from ev'ry tongue
Will one day come.

Before the Son we'll stand,
Made faultless through the Lamb;
Believing hearts find promised grace—
Salvation comes.

Hear heaven's voices sing;
Their thund'rous anthem rings
Through em'rald courts and sapphire skies.
Their praises rise.
All glory, wisdom, pow'r,
Strength, thanks, and honor are
To God our King, who reigns on high
Forevermore.

And there we'll find our home,
Our life before the throne;
We'll honor Him in perfect song
Where we belong.
He'll wipe each tear-stained eye
As thirst and hunger die.
The Lamb becomes our Shepherd King;
We'll reign with Him.

Hear heaven's voices sing;
Their thund'rous anthem rings
Through em'rald courts and sapphire skies.
Their praises rise.
All glory, wisdom, pow'r,
Strength, thanks, and honor are
To God our King, who reigns on high
Forevermore, forevermore.

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Through em'rald courts and sapphire skies.
Their praises rise.
All glory, wisdom, pow'r,
Strength, thanks, and honor are
To God our King, who reigns on high
Forevermore.

Keith and Kristyn Getty

Faith + Life Connections

Have you ever been kind to someone? Maybe you gave food to the food pantry or hugged someone who was sad. Jesus said that when we serve and love others, it's like we're serving and loving Him! When Jesus lives in our hearts, we want to love and help others, just as He loves and helps us. What will you do today to help someone?

Matthew 25:31-46

What will happen when Jesus comes again? Wonderful things! All believers who have died will be raised to life! Jesus will destroy the devil and all evil forever. And Jesus will reign as our loving King forever. Look up and sing "The King of Glory Comes."

1 Corinthians 15:20-28

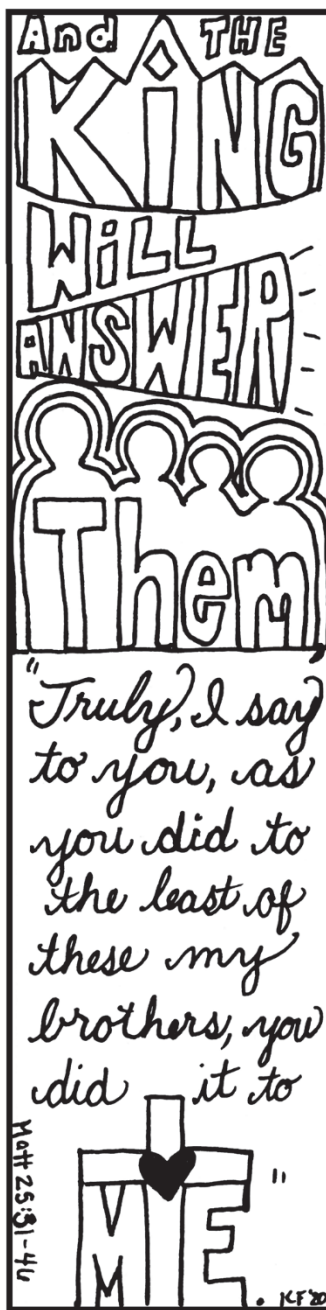
There are so many reasons to praise God! What are some reasons the psalmist gives? What are some reasons you have to praise God?

Psalms 95:1-7a

Memorize:

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

Psalms 95:1



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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.

