

*For the Life of the Church,*



*Mark Lazenby, Make Mountains 3 (for R.T.): Collage*

*For the Life of the World:*

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Matthew 18 / The Letter of Paul to Titus

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CHRIST COMMUNITY  
CHURCH  
*Changed Hearts. Changed Lives. Changed Community.*



*For the Life of the Church,  
For the Life of the World:*

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*Matthew 18 / The Letter of Paul to Titus*

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# *Introduction*

“Christianity is primarily, indeed, a doctrine, but only that it may be in the true sense a life; and the two can never be kept apart from each other in the public teaching of the church without imminent peril to both.”

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## *Patrick Fairbairn, 1&2 Timothy and Titus: Geneva Series*

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What is having the greatest impact on how the Church is viewed in the world? Are we giving off the sweet aroma of the Gospel amid the stench of a fallen world? Do the principalities and powers of darkness have to make up lies about the Church in order to confuse her message? Is Satan having to work overtime to dig deep to find anything against the elect of God to expose in the world? These are all great questions that are worthy of our time and consideration though they could easily overwhelm us given the immensity of the world and the checkered history, past and present, of the Church.

Unfortunately, there are too many available horror stories concerning the Church and her people that the world sees no reason to engage the church. The hard work has already been done for Satan and his principalities and powers of darkness concerning our hypocritical witness. It has been said that the Church is the only place where we shoot our wounded. This is a discouraging indictment.<sup>1</sup>

However, we can take heart, for our Savior reigns and our God will not be mocked! God has provided everything that we would ever need in the person and work of Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, the Lord’s Day Sabbath, and His word read, preached, prayed, sung, and made visible in baptism and the Lord’s Supper. We have not been left to fend for ourselves trying to make up for the ills of what others have done (or not done) in the name of Christ. Our Father provides for our Church to be filled with life more abundant to serve as a witness to those who are lost, wandering, and wounded. The question really becomes whether we will make us of these things for the life of the church and for the life of the world.

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<sup>1</sup> This entire paragraph is a bit of a gross overstatement given the number of faithful churches and people who quietly go about serving the Lord without drawing attention to themselves; however, there is still too much material available for the world to work into a caricatured distortion and dismiss the Church and its people.

We will begin this series with **Matthew 18** which my mentor Tom Anderson lamented is oft quoted but rarely practiced. Most are familiar with the steps of conflict resolution and discipline in **Matthew 18:15-17** whether they practice them or not. Unfortunately, many don't understand how it connects with the surrounding context that calls for God's people to display a child-like humility as reflected by a genuine concern for the peace and the purity of the Church given its witness in the world. As Jesus declared in **John 13:34-35**, "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." It is easy to display this love when all is going well, but what about when we have sinned against one another? Brian Schwertly rightly concludes, "If you are the one who has been wronged, why does Christ demand that you take the initiative? Because Christian love always regards the welfare of a brother as more important than oneself."<sup>2</sup> If we are unwilling to pursue forgiveness and reconciliation within the Church with eternal brothers and sisters, then what confidence can the world have in our message of forgiveness and reconciliation to them? Again Schwertly correctly observes, "When professing believers treat each other in a manner inconsistent with the Gospel, the world notices and mocks both Christ and His church."<sup>3</sup> What goes on inside the Church impacts what can go on outside of the Church.

The series will continue through the letter of Paul to **Titus** who is a young pastor who has undertaken the difficult task of continuing the work of the Church begun in the stony ground of Crete. John Calvin writes of the Church in Crete in *1&2 Timothy and Titus*: "How wonderful it is that God's plan is to call such a wicked people, who are infamous for their vices, to be among the first to share in his Gospel. It is just as marvelous that the kindness of God's heavenly grace is given to people who are not worthy to live on this earth. So, in that corrupt country, as though at the heart of hell, Christ's church held on and kept expanding, even though it was infected by the evil habits that prevailed there." In chapter 1, Paul addresses the doctrine and witness of the leadership of the church which is of foremost concern for the missional purpose of the fledgling Church. He goes on to expound on the doctrine and witness of the members of the church in chapter 2. Chapter 3 concludes with the doctrine and witness of the Church in the world where they once proudly walked in their sinful brokenness.<sup>4</sup> Paul's concern for both doctrine for the life of the Church and witness for the life of the world helps us to see the critical relationship between the two. As **Westminster 25.2** states, there is no hope for salvation for those in the world apart from the doctrine and

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<sup>2</sup> "Conflict Resolution in the Church: A Study of Matthew 18:15-16." (1999);

<http://graceonlinelibrary.org/church-ministry/church-discipline/conflict-resolution-in-the-church-a-study-of-matthew-1815-16-by-brian-schwertley/>

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> My breakdown of the 3 chapters of Titus is modified from John R. W. Stott's analysis in *The Message of 1 Timothy and Titus: Guard the Truth* (Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 1996), 167.

witness of the Church. A Church embroiled in inward focus and turmoil cannot give time and energy to its mission in the world to seek and to save the lost.

May we be equipped by **Matthew 18** and Paul's letter to **Titus** to serve as a Church called to continue the faithful work begun in the rocky soil of Kennesaw, Georgia and the surrounding area begun in September of 2000. The soil is rocky in part because nearly everyone already thinks they are a Christian of some stripe. The ones that don't believe have typically been burned by the Church or another Christian and are resistant resulting in hardened soil. The growing population of immigrants poses a number of challenges none of which is greater than being mistreated or declared unworthy by those who also confess God as Father. In addition, the political and cultural climate grows ever more volatile and combative drawing sharp lines and fracturing community. What is this Church to do to fulfill its mission in the middle of all of this? We start by grounding ourselves in the sure doctrine of the forgiveness of Jesus Christ for the orphaned enemies that we once were who have now become sons and daughters of a family filled with life more abundant. Based on this firm foundation, we can with confidence bear witness to and invite others into this redemptive reality as fellow disciples.

We will continue to seek nourishment from our historic faith and the Old and New Testaments for our weekly devotion and worship. The calls to worship will come from the Psalms in which we will discover God's blessing of His people to be able to display His glory in the world. We will join the voices of the saints over the centuries as we confess **Titus 3:3-7** and **Chapter 25.2: Of the Church from the Westminster Confession of Faith** to remind us who we are and of our purpose as Christ's church. Our assurances of pardon will be granted from Paul's letters to the Corinthians in which he sought to guide the church to display the assured works of Christ for the life of the world. The Pauline epistles will provide our benedictory blessings each week as we see how God blesses His people in Christ and calls them to bear witness to that blessing in the world. All of these elements together should help us to grow in our understanding of how the life of the Church has a significant impact on the life of the world.

This devotional is designed to encourage daily meditation and prayer in personal devotions and/or family worship. You are encouraged to use it the week prior to the associated sermon so that you and your family are prepared for worship. In addition to the Scriptures and associated questions, there are opportunities to pray for the various aspects of the Church. We also have the opportunity to pray on Saturday and Sunday, the Lord's Day Sabbath, to prepare ourselves for worship as well as praying for those who will attend with us. Our desire is to continue to facilitate and grow in our dependence on the Lord through prayer.

May God bless our time in personal devotion, family worship, and corporate worship as we seek to for the Church to grow in the joy of salvation and unity in Christ for the sake of its mission in the world!

*Soli Deo Gloria!*

# Sermon Schedule<sup>5</sup>

<i>Date</i>	<i>Call to Worship</i>	<i>Assurance of Pardon</i>	<i>Benediction</i>	<i>Sacrament</i>
<i>Sunday, 6/12: Matthew 18:1-14</i>	<i>Psalm 48</i>	<i>1 Corinthians 1:26-31</i>	<i>Philippians 4:4-7</i>	<i>The Lord's Table</i>
<i>Sunday, 6/19: Matthew 18:15-20</i>	<i>Psalm 32</i>	<i>1 Corinthians 5:6-8</i>	<i>2 Corinthians 13:11-14</i>	
<i>Sunday, 6/26: Matthew 18:21-35</i>	<i>Psalm 103</i>	<i>1 Corinthians 1:4-9</i>	<i>Galatians 6:14-16</i>	<i>The Lord's Table</i>
<i>Sunday, 7/10: Titus 1:1-4</i>	<i>Psalm 105:1-11</i>	<i>1 Corinthians 2:1-5</i>	<i>2 Timothy 4:18</i>	
<i>Sunday, 7/17: Titus 1:5-9</i>	<i>Psalm 26</i>	<i>1 Corinthians 11:23-26</i>	<i>Colossians 3:23-24</i>	<i>The Lord's Table</i>
<i>Sunday, 7/24: Titus 1:10-16</i>	<i>Psalm 62</i>	<i>1 Corinthians 1:18-25</i>	<i>1 Timothy 6:20-21</i>	
<i>Sunday, 7/31: Titus 2:1-10</i>	<i>Psalm 148</i>	<i>2 Corinthians 1:20-22</i>	<i>1 Thessalonians 5:9-11</i>	
<i>Sunday, 8/7: Titus 2:11-15</i>	<i>Psalm 27</i>	<i>2 Corinthians 2:14</i>	<i>1 Thessalonians 5:23-24</i>	<i>The Lord's Table</i>
<i>Sunday, 8/14: Titus 3:1-15</i>	<i>Psalm 23</i>	<i>2 Corinthians 5:14-21</i>	<i>2 Thessalonians 3:16</i>	

<sup>5</sup> July 3<sup>rd</sup> is not included due to having a guest preacher on that Sunday.



# *Weekly Congregational Confession:*

[3] For we ourselves were once foolish, disobedient,  
led astray, slaves to various passions and pleasures,  
passing our days in malice and envy, hated by others and hating one another.  
[4] But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared,  
[5] he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness,  
but according to his own mercy,  
by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit,  
[6] whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior,  
[7] so that being justified by his grace we might become  
heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

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## *Titus 3:3-7 ESV*

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II. The visible church, which is also catholic or universal under the gospel (not confined to one nation, as before under the law), consists of all those throughout the world that profess the true religion; and of their children: and is the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ, the house and family of God, out of which there is no ordinary possibility of salvation.

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## *Westminster Shorter Catechism, Chapter 25: Of the Church*

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# The Week of June 12<sup>th</sup>:

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## Matthew 18:1-14: Begin and End with Child-like Humility

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*Monday:* **Psalm 48:** Consider those who made sure that you knew of God and of His love for you in Jesus. How are you sharing this with the next generation?

*Tuesday:* **1 Corinthians 1:26-31:** What do you boast in (or talk most about, share most with others, promote, post, etc.)?

*Wednesday:* Pray for the children at Christ Community you know by name to come to and grow in a saving knowledge of Christ alone by God's grace alone through faith alone.

*Thursday:* **Matthew 18:1-14:** What are some ways in which you exhibit a child-like humility in the practice of your faith?

*Friday:* **Philippians 4:4-7:** Rejoice in the Lord for all that He has done for you in Christ. Share with someone the difference it has made for you to become a child of God.

*Saturday:* Take time to read the preparatory letter and pray to prepare for the Lord's Table. Give thanks for God's unwillingness to leave you lost and orphaned.

*Sunday: The Lord's Day Sabbath with the Lord's Table:* Pray for the means of grace to bear fruit worthy of celebration both in our midst and before the throne above.

[12] Walk about Zion, go around her, number her towers,  
[13] consider well her ramparts, go through her citadels, that you may tell the next generation [14] that this is God, our God forever and ever. He will guide us forever.

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Psalm 48:12-14 ESV

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# The Week of June 19<sup>th</sup>:

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## Matthew 18:15-20: If Your Brother Sins Against You

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*Monday:* **Psalm 32:** Give thanks to the Lord for His faithfulness to forgive confessed sin and bless you with being surrounded by His steadfast love.

*Tuesday:* **1 Corinthians 5:6-8:** If Christ, our Passover lamb, gave His life and suffered the full weight of our sin and the due wrath of God to cleanse us to display God's glory, then what responsibility do we have to maintain the Church which displays God's glory in the world?

*Wednesday:* Pray for humility and unity within Christ Community for the sake of displaying the glory of God in the world.

*Thursday:* **Matthew 18:15-20:** Have you ever been involved with the practice of this portion of **Matthew 18**? What was the result? What most contributed to the result?

*Friday:* **2 Corinthians 13:11-14:** Meditate on the blessing of being restored to and at peace with God, with those around you as much as it depends on you, and within yourself.

*Saturday:* Pray for the Holy Spirit to help you prepare your heart, mind, and soul for worship on the Lord's Day Sabbath.

*Sunday: The Lord's Day Sabbath:* Pray for the Holy Spirit to help you understand the right application of **Matthew 18:15-20** and to have the courage to practice it when needed.

[1] Blessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.

[2] Blessed is the man against whom the LORD counts no iniquity,  
and in whose spirit there is no deceit.

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## Psalm 32:1-2 ESV

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# The Week of June 26<sup>th</sup>:

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## Matthew 18:21-35: The Parable of the Unforgiving Servant

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*Monday:* **Psalm 103:** Bless the Lord for all of the benefits that you have received through your forgiveness in Him.

*Tuesday:* **1 Corinthians 1:4-9:** Give thanks for how the grace of God that was given in Christ Jesus has affected those around you with whom you are in fellowship in Christ.

*Wednesday:* Pray for those you know who are struggling to forgive someone else and ask the Lord to give them wisdom and opportunity to be free of their burden.

*Thursday:* **Matthew 18:21-35:** Who is most harmed by unforgiveness? How does God deal with the unforgiving? Consider His grace even in this discipline.

*Friday:* **Galatians 6:14-16:** What does it look like in your life for the world to be crucified to you and you to the world?

*Saturday:* Take time to read the preparatory letter and pray to prepare for the Lord's Table. Ask the Holy Spirit to show you any ways in which you are being unforgiving.

*Sunday: The Lord's Day Sabbath with the Lord's Table:* Pray for the Holy Spirit to help our congregation to grow in forgiveness as a result of our worship this day.

[1] Bless the LORD, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name!

[2] Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits,

[3] who forgives all your iniquity, who heals all your diseases,

[4] who redeems your life from the pit, who crowns you with steadfast love and mercy,

[5] who satisfies you with good so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.

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### Psalm 103:1-5 ESV

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# The Week of July 10<sup>th</sup>:

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## Titus 1:1-4: For the Sake of the Faith of God's Elect

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*Monday:* Psalm 105:1-11: What are some of the wondrous works that the Lord has done in your life that would be worth telling to others?

*Tuesday:* 1 Corinthians 2:1-5: Give thanks to God for sending preachers who decided to know nothing except Jesus Christ and Him crucified who have had an impact on your life.

*Wednesday:* Pray for God to raise up servants of God from within Christ Community to preach Christ alone by grace alone through faith alone.

*Thursday:* Titus 1:1-4: How are you growing in your knowledge of the truth, which accords with godliness, in hope of eternal life?

*Friday:* 2 Timothy 4:18: Praise God for the times that He has rescued you from evil deeds in order to preserve you for His glorious purposes.

*Saturday:* Pray for the Holy Spirit to help you prepare your heart, mind, and soul for worship on the Lord's Day Sabbath.

*Sunday: The Lord's Day Sabbath:* Pray for those who are leading in worship today as they serve God for the sake of the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ.

[1] Oh give thanks to the LORD; call upon his name; make known his deeds among the peoples! [2] Sing to him, sing praises to him; tell of all his wondrous works!

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### Psalm 105:1-2 ESV

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# The Week of July 17<sup>th</sup>:

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## Titus 1:5-9: Elders: The Exemplars and Defenders of the Faith

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*Monday:* **Psalm 26:** In what ways are you walking in integrity and faithfulness to the Lord both inside and outside the Church?

*Tuesday:* **1 Corinthians 11:23-26:** Give thanks to God for all that is signified in the bread and cup as it represents the broken body and shed blood of Christ.

*Wednesday:* Pray for the elders at Christ Community that they would be both exemplars and defenders of the faith.

*Thursday:* **Titus 1:5-9:** Why is it so important that the elders of the Church have an impeccable testimony with those outside of the Church? Is it less important for you?

*Friday:* **Colossians 3:23-24:** What should be the primary motivation and blessing for the work that you do in the world?

*Saturday:* Take time to read the preparatory letter and pray to prepare for the Lord's Table. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you be more mindful of how you display your faith in the world.

*Sunday: The Lord's Day Sabbath with the Lord's Table:* Pray for the Holy Spirit to be at work in the men of Christ Community to desire to serve the Church for God's glory.

[8] O LORD, I love the habitation of your house and the place where your glory dwells. [9] Do not sweep my soul away with sinners, nor my life with bloodthirsty men, [10] in whose hands are evil devices, and whose right hands are full of bribes. [11] But as for me, I shall walk in my integrity; redeem me, and be gracious to me. [12] My foot stands on level ground; in the great assembly I will bless the LORD.

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Psalm 26:8-12 ESV

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# The Week of July 24<sup>th</sup>:

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## Titus 1:10-16: False Teachers: Words and Deeds Disconnected

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*Monday:* **Psalm 62:** Give thanks to God for His provision of the various means of grace to guide and protect us from the attacks of those who take pleasure in falsehood.

*Tuesday:* **1 Corinthians 1:18-25:** Praise God for His power to save in the cross of Jesus Christ and how it confounds the wisdom of the world.

*Wednesday:* Pray for the Lord to protect Christ Community from false teachers who would seek to destroy the unity of the Church and eclipse the glory of God.

*Thursday:* **Titus 1:10-16:** Are your works consistent with the profession and confession of your words?

*Friday:* **1 Timothy 6:20-21:** Consider those you know who have swerved from the faith due to false knowledge. Pray for the Holy Spirit to draw them to repentance.

*Saturday:* Pray for the Holy Spirit to help you prepare your heart, mind, and soul for worship on the Lord's Day Sabbath.

*Sunday: The Lord's Day Sabbath:* Pray for the Holy Spirit to clarify the truth of the Gospel in worship and call to repentance those who may be promoting or pursuing falsehood.

[5] For God alone, O my soul, wait in silence, for my hope is from him.

[6] He only is my rock and my salvation, my fortress; I shall not be shaken.

[7] On God rests my salvation and my glory; my mighty rock, my refuge is God.

[8] Trust in him at all times, O people; pour out your heart before him; God is a refuge for us. Selah

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## Psalm 62:5-8 ESV

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# The Week of July 31<sup>st</sup>:

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## Titus 2:1-10: Sound Doctrine for Every Member of the Church

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*Monday:* **Psalm 148:** Praise God for raising up a horn of salvation for His people in Christ the King.

*Tuesday:* **2 Corinthians 1:20-22:** How have you been blessed by all of God's promises finding their Yes! and Amen! in the person and work of Christ?

*Wednesday:* Pray for older men and women and the younger men and women at Christ Community to help each other to grow in sound doctrine.

*Thursday:* **Titus 2:1-10:** How are you helping others to grow in sound doctrine? How are you being helped to grow in it?

*Friday:* **1 Thessalonians 5:9-11:** Give thanks to God for those whom He has placed in your life to encourage you and build you up.

*Saturday:* Pray for the Holy Spirit to help you prepare your heart, mind, and soul for worship on the Lord's Day Sabbath.

*Sunday: The Lord's Day Sabbath:* Pray for the Holy Spirit to help our church experience the sweetness and encouragement of Christian fellowship this day.

[11] Kings of the earth and all peoples, princes and all rulers of the earth!

[12] Young men and maidens together, old men and children!

[13] Let them praise the name of the LORD, for his name alone is exalted; his majesty is above earth and heaven.

[14] He has raised up a horn for his people, praise for all his saints, for the people of Israel who are near to him. Praise the LORD!

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### Psalm 148:11-14 ESV

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# The Week of August 7<sup>th</sup>:

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## Titus 2:11-15: The Church of Jesus Christ: A Purified People Zealous for Good Works

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*Monday:* Psalm 27: Whom shall the redeemed fear or be afraid of? How should this impact how we live in the world?

*Tuesday:* 2 Corinthians 2:14: Give thanks to God for leading you always in triumphal procession in Christ so that the fragrance of the Gospel could spread.

*Wednesday:* Pray for the people of Christ Community to be zealous for good works through salvation in Christ alone.

*Thursday:* Titus 2:11-15: How are you being trained to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives?

*Friday:* 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24: Meditate on the blessed assurance that you have in Jesus Christ. Consider the freedom that this gives you between the now and the not yet.

*Saturday:* Take time to read the preparatory letter and pray to prepare for the Lord's Table. Ask the Holy Spirit to nourish you with the elements to be zealous for good works.

*Sunday: The Lord's Day Sabbath with the Lord's Table:* Pray for the Holy Spirit to stir our congregation to use this day for good works for His glory.

[13] I believe that I shall look upon the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living!

[14] Wait for the LORD; be strong, and let your heart take courage; wait for the LORD!

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Psalm 27:13-14 ESV

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# The Week of August 14<sup>th</sup>:

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## Titus 3:1-15: Be Ready for Every Good Work to Those Outside the Church

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*Monday:* **Psalm 23:** Meditate on how Christ serves as your shepherd both in the Church and in the world. Recount situations in both contexts where He served you as shepherd.

*Tuesday:* **2 Corinthians 5:14-21:** What role does the love of Christ play in how you engage those inside and outside the Church? How are you serving in the ministry of reconciliation?

*Wednesday:* Pray for those who you know are outside of the Church in your family, friends, neighbors, co-workers, and other acquaintances.

*Thursday:* **Titus 3:1-15:** Consider what you were apart from Christ. What hope does this give you for those who don't yet know the goodness and loving kindness of God in Christ?

*Friday:* **2 Thessalonians 3:16:** Give thanks to God for His peace that surpasses all understanding and is available to us as all times and in every way.

*Saturday:* Pray for the Holy Spirit to help you prepare your heart, mind, and soul for worship on the Lord's Day Sabbath.

*Sunday: The Lord's Day Sabbath with the Lord's Table:* Pray for the Holy Spirit to give our church a genuine heart to seek to save the lost and orphaned.

[1] The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. [2] He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters. [3] He restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

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Psalm 23:1-3 ESV

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