

Walking Together in the Word

Devotions on the Weekly Scripture Readings for August 2025

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 28–August 2, 2025

This devotional material is based on the Bible readings for Sunday, August 3.

Proper 13

The Gospel: Luke 12:13–21

The Parable of the Rich Fool

13 Someone in the crowd said to him, “Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me.”

14 Jesus replied, “Man, who appointed me a judge or an arbiter between you?” 15 Then he said to them, “Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; life does not consist in an abundance of possessions.”

16 And he told them this parable: “The ground of a certain rich man yielded an abundant harvest. 17 He thought to himself, ‘What shall I do? I have no place to store my crops.’

18 “Then he said, ‘This is what I’ll do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store my surplus grain. 19 And I’ll say to myself, “You have plenty of grain laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry.”’

20 “But God said to him, ‘You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?’

21 “This is how it will be with whoever stores up things for themselves but is not rich toward God.”

Devotion on the Gospel

That’s kind of a scary story! But it is also really, really good news! Jesus reminds us that a person’s life does not rely on the abundance of possessions. Think about your life. Often we are measured by the abundance of possessions. We think we are really cool if we have the latest video games, the best toys, the newest car, the biggest house, the longest vacations. We spend lots of time every day focused on our things, our stuff. Parents work many, many hours each day to earn money to buy stuff. Kids use many, many hours each day playing with and protecting their stuff. We spend so much time concerned about our stuff!!

So did the man in the story that Jesus tells. He spend so much time measuring the abundance of his possessions that he started to rely on those possessions as his treasure, rather than relying on God as the true treasure! God is always first. God provides all that we need. It is never about the stuff - it is always about God!

That is really, really good news! We aren’t measured by having the most or the best. Instead, we are measured by the love God has for us and the ways God promises to bless us!

Notes, Thoughts, Questions

Jesus often talks about the treasure of the kingdom of God. See Matthew 6:20; Matthew 13:44; and Matthew 19:21.

Do you have possessions that tend to draw you away from God rather than toward Him? Ask God to help you put Him first. He wants to give you what you really need—His love and forgiveness.

IT IS never ABOUT THE STUFF.
IT IS always ABOUT GOD!

Notes, Thoughts, Questions

Apart from God, this life is meaningless, no matter how hard we look for things to satisfy us.

Jesus invites us to come to Him and He will satisfy us with "a spring of living water welling up to eternal life" (John 4:14).

Say a prayer, asking God to satisfy you with His good gifts.

*Verse to Remember:
Colossians 3:2*

In Baptism, we have "put on Christ" (Galatians 3:27). This is our "new self." Cross out the things in the text that you will daily "put to death," and jot down what you will do in your "new self" as a child of God.

The Old Testament Reading: Ecclesiasties 1:2, 12-14, 2:18-26

2 "Meaningless! Meaningless!"

says the Teacher.

"Utterly meaningless!

Everything is meaningless."

12 I, the Teacher, was king over Israel in Jerusalem. 13 I applied my mind to study and to explore by wisdom all that is done under the heavens. What a heavy burden God has laid on mankind! 14 I have seen all the things that are done under the sun; all of them are meaningless, a chasing after the wind.

18 I hated all the things I had toiled for under the sun, because I must leave them to the one who comes after me. 19 And who knows whether that person will be wise or foolish? Yet they will have control over all the fruit of my toil into which I have poured my effort and skill under the sun. This too is meaningless. 20 So my heart began to despair over all my toilsome labor under the sun. 21 For a person may labor with wisdom, knowledge and skill, and then they must leave all they own to another who has not toiled for it. This too is meaningless and a great misfortune. 22 What do people get for all the toil and anxious striving with which they labor under the sun? 23 All their days their work is grief and pain; even at night their minds do not rest. This too is meaningless.

24 A person can do nothing better than to eat and drink and find satisfaction in their own toil. This too, I see, is from the hand of God, 25 for without him, who can eat or find enjoyment? 26 To the person who pleases him, God gives wisdom, knowledge and happiness, but to the sinner he gives the task of gathering and storing up wealth to hand it over to the one who pleases God. This too is meaningless, a chasing after the wind.

The Epistle: Colossians 3:1-11

Living as Those Made Alive in Christ

3 Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. 2 Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. 3 For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. 4 When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

5 Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. 6 Because of these, the wrath of God is coming. 7 You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived. 8 But now you must also rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. 9 Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices 10 and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator. 11 Here there is no Gentile or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all.

The Psalm: Psalm 100

Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth.

2 Worship the Lord with gladness;
come before him with joyful songs.

3 Know that the Lord is God.

It is he who made us, and we are his;
we are his people, the sheep of his pasture.

4 Enter his gates with thanksgiving
and his courts with praise;
give thanks to him and praise his name.

5 For the Lord is good and his love endures forever;
his faithfulness continues through all generations.

THE LORD IS GOOD
AND HIS LOVE
ENDURES FOREVER

Notes, Thoughts, Questions

This psalm of thanksgiving praises God for all that He is and does for us. Highlight the phrases that talk about what God has done and continues to do for us. Circle the phrases that show our response to God's great love.

Notes,
Thoughts,
Questions

The verses of this hymn give hope to us as we travel through life. Pick a verse that especially speaks to you. Copy it onto an index card and keep it with you this week to remind you of God's love and care for you.

The Hymn : All Depends on Our Possessing *LSB 732*

All depends on our possessing
God's abundant grace and blessing,
Though all earthly wealth depart.
They who trust with faith unshaken
By their God are not forsaken
And will keep a dauntless heart.

He who to this day has fed me
And to many joys has led me
Is and ever shall be mine.
He who ever gently schools me,
He who daily guides and rules me
Will remain my help divine.

Many spend their lives in fretting
Over trifles and in getting
Things that have no solid ground.
I shall strive to win a treasure
That will bring me lasting pleasure
And that now is seldom found.

When with sorrow I am stricken,
Hope anew my heart will quicken;
All my longing shall be stilled.
To His loving-kindness tender
Soul and body I surrender,
For on God alone I build.

Well He knows what best to grant me;
All the longing hopes that haunt me,
Joy and sorrow, have their day.
I shall doubt His wisdom never;
As God wills, so be it ever;
I commit to Him my way.

If my days on earth He lengthen,
God my weary soul will strengthen;
All my trust in Him I place.
Earthly wealth is not abiding,
Like a stream away is gliding;
Safe I anchor in His grace.

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on
GOD
ALONE
I
BUILD

Faith + Life Connections

Make a list of your favorite possessions. Is it bad to like things? No, our possessions are gifts from God. It is when they become most important in our lives that we need to beware. God is the only One who can give us what we really need: salvation in Jesus.

Luke 12:13-21

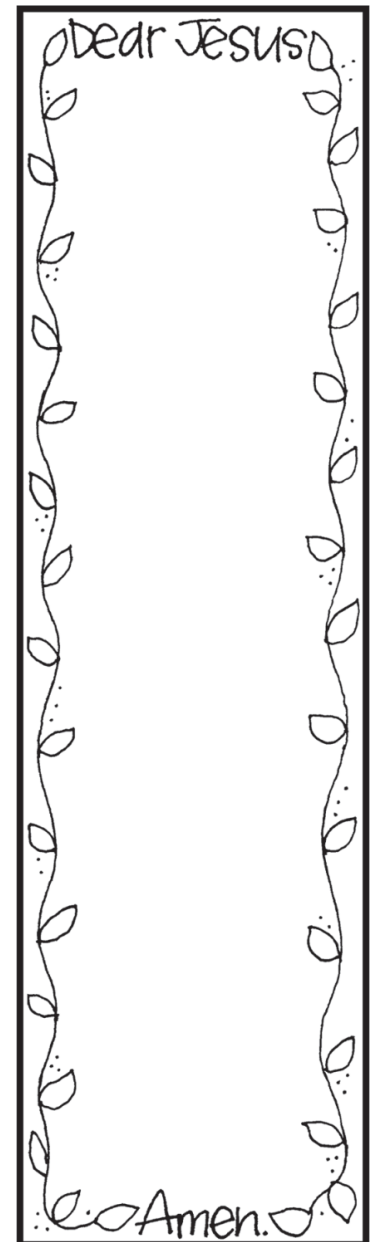
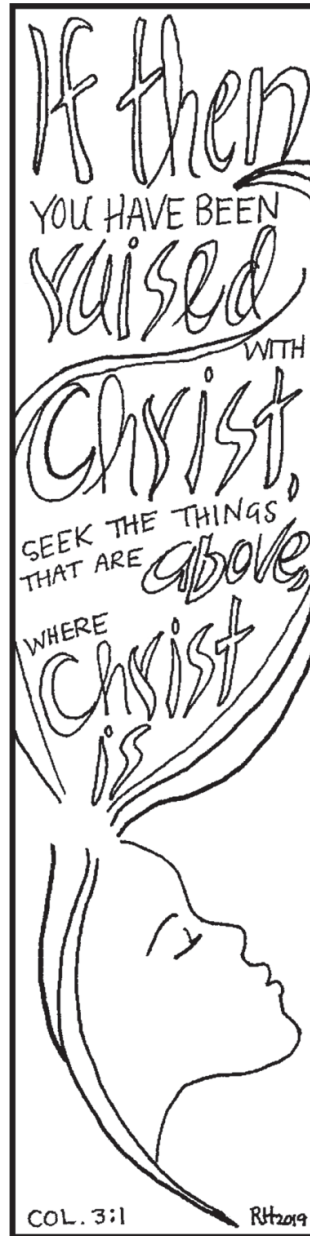
When you wash your hands today, remember your Baptism. In Baptism, God washed away Your sin and made you His child. He clothes you with Christ so you can live a new life in Him.

Colossians 3:1-11

Psalms 100 is a psalm of thanksgiving, praising God for all He has done for us. Look up the words and music of the hymn "All People that on Earth Do Dwell" (Lutheran Service Book 791), which uses Psalm 100 as its text. Sing along!

Psalm 100

Verse to Remember:
Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.
Colossians 3:2



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Prayer for the Week

O Lord, grant us wisdom to recognize the treasures You have stored up for us in heaven, that we may never despair but always rejoice and be thankful for the riches of Your grace; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Walking Together in the Word

August 4–August 9, 2025

This devotional material is based on the Bible readings for Sunday, August 10.

Proper 14

The Gospel: Luke 12:22–34

Do Not Worry

22 Then Jesus said to his disciples: “Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat; or about your body, what you will wear. 23 For life is more than food, and the body more than clothes. 24 Consider the ravens: They do not sow or reap, they have no storeroom or barn; yet God feeds them. And how much more valuable you are than birds! 25 Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to your life? 26 Since you cannot do this very little thing, why do you worry about the rest?”

27 “Consider how the wild flowers grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you, not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. 28 If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today, and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, how much more will he clothe you—you of little faith! 29 And do not set your heart on what you will eat or drink; do not worry about it. 30 For the pagan world runs after all such things, and your Father knows that you need them. 31 But seek his kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well.

32 “Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom. 33 Sell your possessions and give to the poor. Provide purses for yourselves that will not wear out, a treasure in heaven that will never fail, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys. 34 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Devotion on the Gospel

“Do not worry,” Jesus said. Easier said than done, we say! Life is filled with things that cause us worry. Issues at work, strained relationships, kids and grandkids, failing health, money problems, the housing market, 100 degree heat in July! How can God expect us not to worry about these things when they are such important parts of our lives?

If we take another look at the text, God tells us exactly why we shouldn’t worry. Reason one: we are valuable to God. The God who created all things continues to care for His creation, and we are number one on His list! Second reason: worrying doesn’t help. Worry has no power to improve our situation, so what’s the point? Third, we have a God who not only knows all our needs (even better than we know them), He has the power, and the desire, to provide for us.

Those are three great reasons not to worry! How much better our earthly lives will be if we let go of all our worries, trusting God will care for us. But Jesus wants more for us than a worry-free life. He wants to give us the kingdom.

Money, health, kids, work, relationships—these are important, for sure! But they are not what is *most* important. Most important is His kingdom: His gracious rule and reign over our lives that comes through faith in Jesus and is both for this life and for life eternal.

Notes, Thoughts, Questions

God says, “Do not fear/ be worried/be anxious” over 200 times in Scripture! God knows we worry, and He cares. Look up the following verses to find comfort and strength in times of worry:

Philippians 4:6-7
1 Peter 5:7
John 14:27
Matthew 6:33-34
Isaiah 41:10
Matthew 11:28-30
Joshua 1:9

What are some things that are causing you to worry right now? Pray for God to help you release those worries to Him and replace them with faith and trust in Him.

Notes, Thoughts, Questions

Twenty-five years is a long time to wait for a promise to be fulfilled. But God kept His promise, and today God's people, believers, are as countless as the stars.

What are some other promises that God made and kept?

Are you waiting on a promise of God?

Pray for God to strengthen and sustain you as He did for Abram. You can trust God to keep His promises.

Hebrews 11 is sometimes called "The Faith Chapter." It describes the faith of Old Testament people who did not live to see the Savior but trusted in God's promises. Read some of their stories.

Jesus spoke of this faith, and of us, when He appeared to Thomas after His resurrection. See John 20:24-29.

The Old Testament Reading: Genesis 15:1-6

The Lord's Covenant With Abram

After this, the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision:

"Do not be afraid, Abram.

I am your shield,

your very great reward."

2 But Abram said, "Sovereign Lord, what can you give me since I remain childless and the one who will inherit my estate is Eliezer of Damascus?" 3 And Abram said, "You have given me no children; so a servant in my household will be my heir."

4 Then the word of the Lord came to him: "This man will not be your heir, but a son who is your own flesh and blood will be your heir." 5 He took him outside and said, "Look up at the sky and count the stars—if indeed you can count them."

Then he said to him, "So shall your offspring be."

6 Abram believed the Lord, and he credited it to him as righteousness.

The Epistle: Hebrews 11:1-16

Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see. 2 This is what the ancients were commended for.

3 By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God's command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible.

4 By faith Abel brought God a better offering than Cain did. By faith he was commended as righteous, when God spoke well of his offerings. And by faith Abel still speaks, even though he is dead.

5 By faith Enoch was taken from this life, so that he did not experience death: "He could not be found, because God had taken him away." For before he was taken, he was commended as one who pleased God. 6 And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.

7 By faith Noah, when warned about things not yet seen, in holy fear built an ark to save his family. By his faith he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness that is in keeping with faith.

8 By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going.

9 By faith he made his home in the promised land like a stranger in a foreign country; he lived in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise. 10 For he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God. 11 And by faith even Sarah, who was past childbearing age, was enabled to bear children because she considered him faithful who had made the promise. 12 And so from this one man, and he as good as dead, came descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as countless as the sand on the seashore.

13 All these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance, admitting that they were foreigners and strangers on earth. 14 People who say such things show that they are looking for a country of their own. 15 If they had been thinking of the country they had left, they would have had opportunity to return. 16 Instead, they were longing for a better country—a heavenly one.

Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them.

The Psalm: Psalm 33:12-22

Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord,
the people he chose for his inheritance.

13 From heaven the Lord looks down
and sees all mankind;

14 from his dwelling place he watches
all who live on earth—

15 he who forms the hearts of all,
who considers everything they do.

16 No king is saved by the size of his army;
no warrior escapes by his great strength.

17 A horse is a vain hope for deliverance;
despite all its great strength it cannot save.

18 But the eyes of the Lord are on those who fear him,
on those whose hope is in his unfailing love,

19 to deliver them from death
and keep them alive in famine.

20 We wait in hope for the Lord;
he is our help and our shield.

21 In him our hearts rejoice,
for we trust in his holy name.

22 May your unfailing love be with us, Lord,
even as we put our hope in you.

Notes, Thoughts, Questions

*What does this
Psalm say about
God's interest and
involvement in the
lives of the people
He has made?*

*Verse to Remember:
Psalm 33:20*

WE WAIT IN HOPE FOR THE LORD;
HE IS OUR HELP AND OUR SHIELD.

Notes, Thoughts, Questions

Behind all our worries and fears is the evil one, who works to create worry and fear in our lives.

What does this hymn say about the One who fights for us? How might this hymn provide comfort, strength, and hope in times of trial?

The Hymn: O Little Flock, Fear Not the Foe *LSB 666*

O little flock, fear not the foe
Who madly seeks your overthrow;
Dread not his rage and pow'r.
And though your courage sometimes faints,
His seeming triumph o'er God's saints
Lasts but a little hour.

Be of good cheer; your cause belongs
To Him who can avenge your wrongs;
Leave it to Him, our Lord.
Though hidden yet from mortal eyes,
His Gideon shall for you arise,
Uphold you and His Word.

As true as God's own Word is true,
Not earth nor hell's satanic crew
Against us shall prevail.
Their might? A joke, a mere facade!
God is with us and we with God—
Our vict'ry cannot fail.

Amen, Lord Jesus, grant our prayer;
Great Captain, now Thine arm make bare,
Fight for us once again!
So shall Thy saints and martyrs raise
A mighty chorus to Thy praise
Forevermore. Amen.

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O LITTLE FLOCK, Fear NOT THE FOE

Faith + Life Connections

Do you ever worry? What do you worry about? Worrying is similar to fear; like being afraid something will happen, or being afraid you won't have something you need. Jesus doesn't want you to worry. He wants you to trust in Him! Jesus knows all your needs, and He promises to give you what you need, most importantly, faith in Him!

Luke 12:22-34

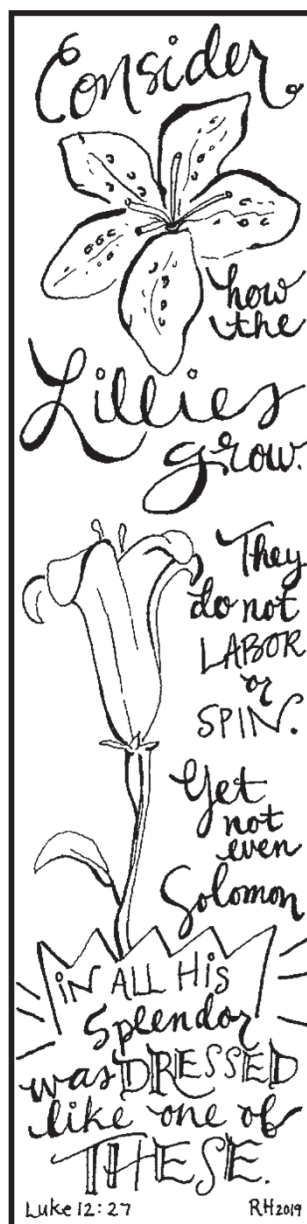
What is something you have had to wait for? Abram waited 25 years for God to give him a son. But God kept His promise. God has made many promises to you: to love you, to forgive you, to one day bring you to be with Him forever. You can trust God to keep His promises!

Genesis 15:1-6

Hebrews 11 is sometimes called "The Faith Chapter." Choose one or two of the people listed in this chapter and read about their faith in a Bible storybook.

Hebrews 11:1-16

Verse to remember:
We wait in hope for the Lord;
he is our help and our shield.
Psalm 33:20



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Prayer for the Week

Almighty and merciful God, it is by Your grace that we live as Your people who offer acceptable service. Grant that we may walk by faith, and not by sight, in the way that leads to eternal life; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Walking Together in the Word

August 11–August 16, 2025

This devotional material is based on the Bible readings for Sunday, August 17.

Proper 15

The Gospel: Luke 12:49–53

Not Peace but Division

49 “I have come to bring fire on the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled! 50 But I have a baptism to undergo, and what constraint I am under until it is completed! 51 Do you think I came to bring peace on earth? No, I tell you, but division. 52 From now on there will be five in one family divided against each other, three against two and two against three. 53 They will be divided, father against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law.”

Devotion on the Gospel

We often think of Jesus as welcoming the little children, or graciously healing the sick, or patiently teaching His disciples, maybe even smiling and laughing. We think of Him lovingly caring for those who were “like sheep without a shepherd.” Or we think of Jesus humbly dying on the cross, praying the Father to forgive even those who nailed Him there. But of course there’s more to Jesus than these things. We see that especially in a reading like this. Jesus is certainly not sugar-coating the hard truths of what He is about: “I come to bring not peace, but division. Fire! Family strife!”

Sounds harsh, doesn’t it? Yes. And it is! God is just and God is holy. He can bring fire that destroys. And the truth of His Word does divide people—even families.

But Jesus is in the business of saving and forgiving and promising good things to His children. He is just, but He is also the One who justifies. He is holy, but He also makes us holy. He does divide people, but He also promises that those who believe in Him will never be separated from Him. That same Jesus who will come one day to judge with fire the living and the dead, is the One who stands between you and the fire of God’s wrath. Instead of you and me, He is consumed. He takes the heat, for us!

Sounds harsh, doesn’t it? Yes. And it is—for Jesus. But for you and for me, it is pure grace!

Notes, Thoughts, Questions

What is the “baptism” that Jesus says He must undergo? See Mark 10:38.

Christians in the Early Church talked about martyrdom as being baptized with blood.

Our Savior God is both just and merciful. Give biblical examples of each trait. What comfort does this give you?

Notes, Thoughts, Questions

God condemned the prophets who should have warned the Israelites of God's judgment. Why? What harm did they do?

Pray for your spiritual leaders to be faithful to God's Word.

The Old Testament Reading: Jeremiah 23:16-29

16 This is what the Lord Almighty says:

"Do not listen to what the prophets are prophesying to you; they fill you with false hopes. They speak visions from their own minds, not from the mouth of the Lord. 17 They keep saying to those who despise me, 'The Lord says: You will have peace.' And to all who follow the stubbornness of their hearts they say, 'No harm will come to you.' 18 But which of them has stood in the council of the Lord to see or to hear his word? Who has listened and heard his word? 19 See, the storm of the Lord will burst out in wrath, a whirlwind swirling down on the heads of the wicked. 20 The anger of the Lord will not turn back until he fully accomplishes the purposes of his heart. In days to come you will understand it clearly. 21 I did not send these prophets, yet they have run with their message; I did not speak to them, yet they have prophesied. 22 But if they had stood in my council, they would have proclaimed my words to my people and would have turned them from their evil ways and from their evil deeds. 23 "Am I only a God nearby," declares the Lord, "and not a God far away? 24 Who can hide in secret places so that I cannot see them?" declares the Lord. "Do not I fill heaven and earth?" declares the Lord. 25 "I have heard what the prophets say who prophesy lies in my name. They say, 'I had a dream! I had a dream!' 26 How long will this continue in the hearts of these lying prophets, who prophesy the delusions of their own minds? 27 They think the dreams they tell one another will make my people forget my name, just as their ancestors forgot my name through Baal worship. 28 Let the prophet who has a dream recount the dream, but let the one who has my word speak it faithfully. For what has straw to do with grain?" declares the Lord. 29 "Is not my word like fire," declares the Lord, "and like a hammer that breaks a rock in pieces?"

"DO NOT I FILL HEAVEN
AND EARTH?"
DECLARES THE LORD.

The Epistle: Hebrews 11:17-31; 12:1-3

17 By faith Abraham, when God tested him, offered Isaac as a sacrifice. He who had embraced the promises was about to sacrifice his one and only son, 18 even though God had said to him, "It is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned." 19 Abraham reasoned that God could even raise the dead, and so in a manner of speaking he did receive Isaac back from death. 20 By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau in regard to their future. 21 By faith Jacob, when he was dying, blessed each of Joseph's sons, and worshiped as he leaned on the top of his staff. 22 By faith Joseph, when his end was near, spoke about the exodus of the Israelites from Egypt and gave instructions concerning the burial of his bones. 23 By faith Moses' parents hid him for three months after he was born, because they saw he was no ordinary child, and they were not afraid of the king's edict. 24 By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be known as the son of Pharaoh's daughter. 25 He chose to be mistreated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin. 26 He regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ as of greater value than the treasures of Egypt, because he was looking ahead to his reward. 27 By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the king's anger; he persevered because he saw him who is invisible. 28 By faith he kept the Passover and the application of blood, so that the destroyer of the firstborn would not touch the firstborn of Israel. 29 By faith the people passed through the Red Sea as on dry land; but when the Egyptians tried to do so, they were drowned. 30 By faith the walls of Jericho fell, after the army had marched around them for seven days. 31 By faith the prostitute Rahab, because she welcomed the spies, was not killed with those who were disobedient. 12 Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, 2 fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. 3 Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.

The Psalm: Psalm 119:81-88

My soul faints with longing for your salvation, but I have put my hope in your word.

82 My eyes fail, looking for your promise; I say, "When will you comfort me?"

83 Though I am like a wineskin in the smoke, I do not forget your decrees.

84 How long must your servant wait?

When will you punish my persecutors?

85 The arrogant dig pits to trap me, contrary to your law.

86 All your commands are trustworthy;
help me, for I am being persecuted without cause.

87 They almost wiped me from the earth, but I have not forsaken your precepts.

88 In your unfailing love preserve my life, that I may obey the statutes of your mouth.

Notes, Thoughts, Questions

Spend some time studying Hebrews 12:1-3. Consider these questions: Who are witnesses of faith in your life? What hinders you? How does fixing your eyes on Jesus keep you on track? Who/what is the "joy set before him [Jesus]"?

Verse to Remember: Hebrews 12:1-2

The psalmist cries out to God in his distress; but he is not without hope. He continues to trust in God's love and salvation.

How can this psalm be a model for our prayers?

Notes,
Thoughts,
Questions

*Underline and talk
about the words that
describe what the
Gospel does for us.*

The Hymn : The Gospel Shows the Father's Grace *LSB 580*

The Gospel shows the Father's grace,
Who sent His Son to save our race,
Proclaims how Jesus lived and died
That we might thus be justified.

It sets the Lamb before our eyes,
Who made the atoning sacrifice,
And calls the souls with guilt oppressed
To come and find eternal rest.

It brings the Savior's righteousness
To robe our souls in royal dress;
From all our guilt it brings release
And gives the troubled conscience peace.

It is the pow'r of God to save
From sin and Satan and the grave;
It works the faith which firmly clings
To all the treasures which it brings.

It bears to all the tidings glad
And bids their hearts no more be sad;
The weary, burdened souls it cheers
And banishes their guilty fears.

May we in faith its message learn
Nor thanklessly its blessings spurn;
May we in faith its truth confess
And praise the Lord, our righteousness

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Faith + Life Connections

Watch a sports game together, live or on TV. Can a player play on opposite teams at the same time? Impossible! You can either be with Jesus or against Him—there is no middle ground. Pray that God would make you bold to share the Gospel with others.

Luke 12:49-53

God gives us examples of faithful believers to follow. Reread some of the examples of faith given to us in Hebrews 11. Then talk about some of the faithful believers who have modeled God's love for you

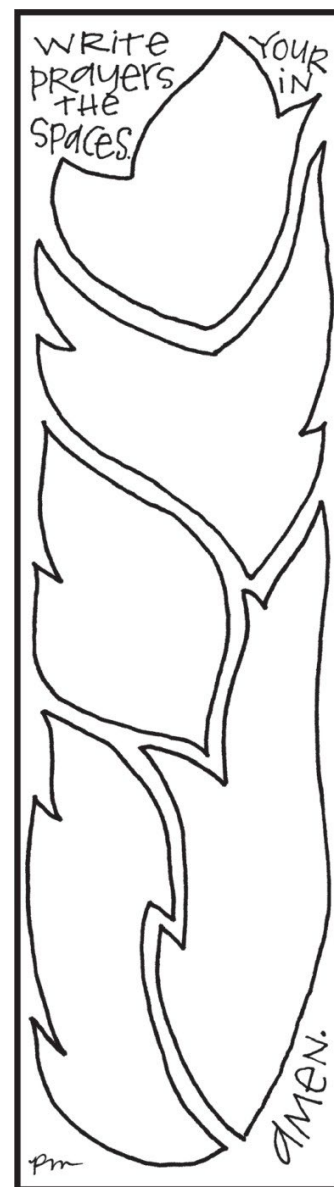
Hebrews 11:17-31, 12:1-3

Can we talk to God and tell Him when we are sad or mad as well as when we are glad? Yes! God invites us to share all our thoughts and feelings with Him. He cares about you and promises to help. Write or draw a prayer to Him now. He's listening!

Psalms 119:81-88

Verse to Remember:

Let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. Hebrews 12:1-2



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Prayer for the Week

Merciful Lord, cleanse and defend Your Church by the sacrifice of Christ. United with Him in Holy Baptism, give us grace to receive with thanksgiving the fruits of His redeeming work and daily follow in His way; through the same Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Walking Together in the Word

August 18–August 23, 2025

This devotional material is based on the Bible readings for Sunday, August 24.

Proper 16

The Gospel: Luke 13:22–30

The Narrow Door

22 Then Jesus went through the towns and villages, teaching as he made his way to Jerusalem. 23 Someone asked him, “Lord, are only a few people going to be saved?”

He said to them, 24 “Make every effort to enter through the narrow door, because many, I tell you, will try to enter and will not be able to. 25 Once the owner of the house gets up and closes the door, you will stand outside knocking and pleading, ‘Sir, open the door for us.’

“But he will answer, ‘I don’t know you or where you come from.’

26 “Then you will say, ‘We ate and drank with you, and you taught in our streets.’

27 “But he will reply, ‘I don’t know you or where you come from. Away from me, all you evildoers!’

28 “There will be weeping there, and gnashing of teeth, when you see Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, but you yourselves thrown out. 29 People will come from east and west and north and south, and will take their places at the feast in the kingdom of God. 30 Indeed there are those who are last who will be first, and first who will be last.”

Devotion on the Gospel

They might have started to wonder. Was anyone going to be good enough to get into God’s kingdom? Jesus had warned people off, or people had made excuses for not following Him. And Jesus made a point to warn that the religious leaders weren’t going to make it. And if even they weren’t going to make it, who could? “Lord, are only a few people going to be saved?”

But Jesus switches the point of that question away from the number of people who might be saved to asking where you stand in your faith life. “Make every effort to enter through the narrow door.” You see, the important question is not *how many* will be saved, but *will you* be saved?

Jesus invites all people to His kingdom. He says that people from all over the world will be there. That’s good news! Because even though the door is narrow, it is wide open to those who believe. And although there’s only one way to enter the kingdom, by being in a relationship with Jesus, God makes it possible for us through Christ.

Jesus has brought us together with God. Our sins have been covered. Jesus died for them on the cross. We can stand before God, not because we’re without fault, but because Jesus has made us clean and forgiven us. And because of Jesus we are part of God’s kingdom. We are friends with God. And we are invited to come in through the narrow door to join the eternal feast.

Notes, Thoughts, Questions

What is the “narrow door” by which we will enter the kingdom of heaven? Jesus Christ alone. See John 14:6.

Jesus turns our attention away from scrutinizing the faith of others to examining our own. In whom do we put complete faith and trust?

Notes, Thoughts, Questions

On Judgment Day, people from every nation and language will see God's glory. All mankind will bow before God, and God's people will live with Him forever.

Why does God discipline us? What does God's discipline do for us?

The Old Testament Reading: Isaiah 66:18-23

18 "And I, because of what they have planned and done, am about to come and gather the people of all nations and languages, and they will come and see my glory. 19 "I will set a sign among them, and I will send some of those who survive to the nations—to Tarshish, to the Libyans and Lydians (famous as archers), to Tubal and Greece, and to the distant islands that have not heard of my fame or seen my glory. They will proclaim my glory among the nations. 20 And they will bring all your people, from all the nations, to my holy mountain in Jerusalem as an offering to the Lord—on horses, in chariots and wagons, and on mules and camels," says the Lord. "They will bring them, as the Israelites bring their grain offerings, to the temple of the Lord in ceremonially clean vessels. 21 And I will select some of them also to be priests and Levites," says the Lord. 22 "As the new heavens and the new earth that I make will endure before me," declares the Lord, "so will your name and descendants endure. 23 From one New Moon to another and from one Sabbath to another, all mankind will come and bow down before me," says the Lord.

The Epistle: Hebrews 12:4-24

4 In your struggle against sin, you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood. 5 And have you completely forgotten this word of encouragement that addresses you as a father addresses his son? It says, "My son, do not make light of the Lord's discipline, and do not lose heart when he rebukes you, 6 because the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and he chastens everyone he accepts as his son." 7 Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as his children. For what children are not disciplined by their father? 8 If you are not disciplined—and everyone undergoes discipline—then you are not legitimate, not true sons and daughters at all. 9 Moreover, we have all had human fathers who disciplined us and we respected them for it. How much more should we submit to the Father of spirits and live! 10 They disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, in order that we may share in his holiness. 11 No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it. 12 Therefore, strengthen your feeble arms and weak knees. 13 "Make level paths for your feet," so that the lame may not be disabled, but rather healed. 14 Make every effort to live in peace with everyone and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord. 15 See to it that no one falls short of the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many. 16 See that no one is sexually immoral, or is godless like Esau, who for a single meal sold his inheritance rights as the oldest son. 17 Afterward, as you know, when he wanted to inherit this blessing, he was rejected. Even though he sought the blessing with tears, he could not change what he had done. 18 You have not come to a mountain that can be touched and that is burning with fire; to darkness, gloom and storm; 19 to a trumpet blast or to such a voice speaking words that those who heard it begged that no further word be spoken to them, 20 because they could not bear what was commanded: "If even an animal touches the mountain, it must be stoned to death." 21 The sight was so terrifying that Moses said, "I am trembling with fear." 22 But you have come to Mount Zion, to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem. You have come to thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly, 23 to the church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven. You have come to God, the Judge of all, to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, 24 to Jesus the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.

The Psalm: Psalm 50:1-15

The Mighty One, God, the Lord,
speaks and summons the earth
from the rising of the sun to where it sets.

2 From Zion, perfect in beauty,
God shines forth.

3 Our God comes
and will not be silent;
a fire devours before him,
and around him a tempest rages.

4 He summons the heavens above,
and the earth, that he may judge his people:

5 "Gather to me this consecrated people,
who made a covenant with me by sacrifice."

6 And the heavens proclaim his righteousness,
for he is a God of justice.

7 "Listen, my people, and I will speak;
I will testify against you, Israel:
I am God, your God.

8 I bring no charges against you concerning your sacrifices
or concerning your burnt offerings, which are ever before me.

9 I have no need of a bull from your stall
or of goats from your pens,

10 for every animal of the forest is mine,
and the cattle on a thousand hills.

11 I know every bird in the mountains,
and the insects in the fields are mine.

12 If I were hungry I would not tell you,
for the world is mine, and all that is in it.

13 Do I eat the flesh of bulls
or drink the blood of goats?

14 "Sacrifice thank offerings to God,
fulfill your vows to the Most High,

15 and call on me in the day of trouble;
I will deliver you, and you will honor me."

Notes, Thoughts, Questions

*God doesn't need
anything from us.
Why, then, did God
command the people
to offer sacrifices?*

*See Hebrews
chapters 9 and 10.*

*Verse to Remember:
Psalm 50:15*

CALL ON ME IN THE DAY OF TROUBLE;
I WILL DELIVER YOU,
AND YOU WILL HONOR ME."

Notes,
Thoughts,
Questions

*This hymn
encompasses many
of the themes found
in the Bible
readings for this
week. Look back at
the readings—how
many connections
can you find?*

The Hymn: Today Your Mercy Calls Us

LSB 915

Today Your mercy calls us
To wash away our sin.
However great our trespass,
Whatever we have been,
However long from mercy
Our hearts have turned away,
Your precious blood can wash us
And make us clean today.

Today Your gate is open,
And all who enter in
Shall find a Father's welcome
And pardon for their sin.
The past shall be forgotten,
A present joy be giv'n,
A future grace be promised,
A glorious crown in heav'n.

Today our Father calls us;
His Holy Spirit waits;
His blessed angels gather
Around the heav'nly gates.
No question will be asked us
How often we have come;
Although we oft have wandered,
It is our Father's home.

O all-embracing Mercy,
O ever-open Door,
What should we do without You
When heart and eye run o'er?
When all things seem against us,
To drive us to despair,
We know one gate is open,
One ear will hear our prayer.

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TODAY
YOUR
Mercy
CALLS
US

Faith + Life Connections

Jesus is the “narrow door” that is the way to heaven. Make a sign with the words of John 14:6 and tape it above a doorway in your house. Read it every time you pass through as a reminder that Jesus is the only Way to eternal life.

Luke 13:22-30

On Judgment Day, God will gather all those who believe in Him from all around the world; those who have died, as well as the living. Who are you looking forward to seeing? Moses? St. Paul? Grandma? Draw a picture or make a list of those “saints.” Don’t forget to draw yourself!

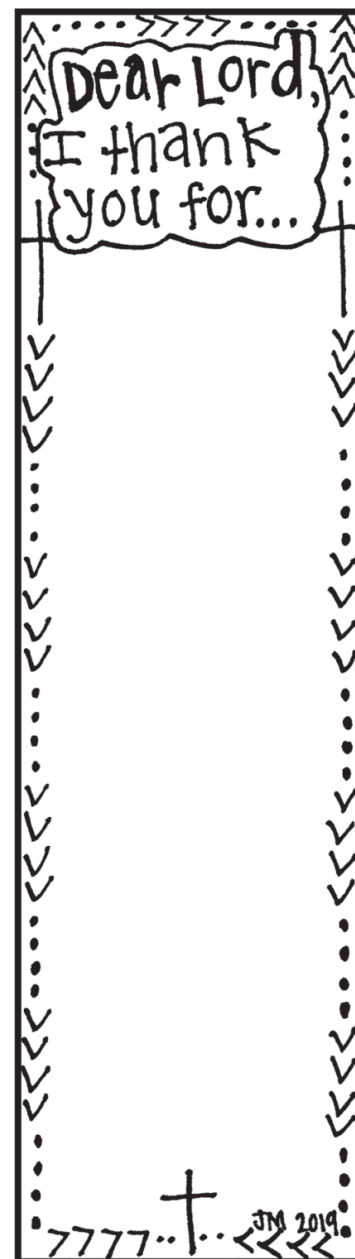
Isaiah 66:18-23

Do you remember the last time you were disciplined? Being disciplined is no fun, but it’s important and it actually helps us. Look again at Hebrews 12:4-24 to see what good comes from being disciplined.

Hebrews 12:4-24

Verse to Remember:
Call on me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you will honor me.

Psalms 50:15



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Prayer for the Week

O Lord, You have called us to enter Your kingdom through the narrow door. Guide us by Your Word and Spirit, and lead us now and always into the feast of Your Son, Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Walking Together in the Word

August 25–August 30, 2025

This devotional material is based on Bible readings for Sunday, August 31.

Proper 17

The Gospel: Luke 14:1-14

One Sabbath, when Jesus went to eat in the house of a prominent Pharisee, he was being carefully watched. 2 There in front of him was a man suffering from abnormal swelling of his body. 3 Jesus asked the Pharisees and experts in the law, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath or not?" 4 But they remained silent. So taking hold of the man, he healed him and sent him on his way. 5 Then he asked them, "If one of you has a child or an ox that falls into a well on the Sabbath day, will you not immediately pull it out?" 6 And they had nothing to say. 7 When he noticed how the guests picked the places of honor at the table, he told them this parable: 8 "When someone invites you to a wedding feast, do not take the place of honor, for a person more distinguished than you may have been invited. 9 If so, the host who invited both of you will come and say to you, 'Give this person your seat.' Then, humiliated, you will have to take the least important place. 10 But when you are invited, take the lowest place, so that when your host comes, he will say to you, 'Friend, move up to a better place.' Then you will be honored in the presence of all the other guests. 11 For all those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted."

12 Then Jesus said to his host, "When you give a luncheon or dinner, do not invite your friends, your brothers or sisters, your relatives, or your rich neighbors; if you do, they may invite you back and so you will be repaid. 13 But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, 14 and you will be blessed. Although they cannot repay you, you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous."

Devotion on the Gospel

Jesus had been invited to a special party. A prominent Pharisee requested that Jesus come to his home. It was a society gathering among the leading citizens. All the important people were there.

Jesus was the guest of honor that night and everybody who counted for anything wanted to be seated near Jesus. These people all wanted to be at the head table with Jesus, there up in front, where all the important people were seated.

If we were there, I imagine we might be doing the same thing. We sometimes get wrapped up in self-interest and self-centeredness too, pushing and shoving to get something better, to be most important, to be honored by others. But Jesus looks around at those prominent people jostling for the good seats—He looks at you and me—and He says: Why are all of you people trying to be so important? Why are you so anxious to be seated at the head table? For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.

He knows what He's talking about, doesn't He? He was humbled. He humbled Himself by becoming a baby, born in our time, in our world. He humbled Himself by suffering in our world, by suffering on a cross, by suffering in our place. He humbled Himself by becoming the lowest of the low—the humblest of the humble—for you and for me. Then He was raised to life and exalted to the right hand of God. And one day, He will raise you and me to eternal life.

Notes, Thoughts, Questions

The Pharisees watched to see if Jesus would break their man-made laws about the Sabbath. How does Jesus show them their hypocrisy? Are we sometimes tempted to judge others on the basis of our traditions?

Jesus often spoke about humility and servanthood. See Luke 9:46-48 and Luke 22:24-27.

Notes, Thoughts, Questions

Do you see a theme developing between the readings? Our sinful nature finds it hard to be humble. But God offers forgiveness to those who humbly repent. See 2 Chronicles 7:14.

*Verse to Remember:
Hebrews 13:8*

There is a lot covered in these verses! Pick a few verses to reread and discuss. Then think about why the writer to the Hebrews placed all these thoughts together.

The Old Testament Reading: Proverbs 25:2–10

It is the glory of God to conceal a matter; to search out a matter is the glory of kings. 3 As the heavens are high and the earth is deep, so the hearts of kings are unsearchable. 4 Remove the dross from the silver, and a silversmith can produce a vessel; 5 remove wicked officials from the king's presence, and his throne will be established through righteousness. 6 Do not exalt yourself in the king's presence, and do not claim a place among his great men; 7 it is better for him to say to you, "Come up here," than for him to humiliate you before his nobles. What you have seen with your eyes 8 do not bring hastily to court, for what will you do in the end if your neighbor puts you to shame? 9 If you take your neighbor to court, do not betray another's confidence, 10 or the one who hears it may shame you and the charge against you will stand.

The Epistle: Hebrews 13:1–17

Keep on loving one another as brothers and sisters. 2 Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by so doing some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it. 3 Continue to remember those in prison as if you were together with them in prison, and those who are mistreated as if you yourselves were suffering. 4 Marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral. 5 Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you." 6 So we say with confidence, "The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can mere mortals do to me?" 7 Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith. 8 Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever. 9 Do not be carried away by all kinds of strange teachings. It is good for our hearts to be strengthened by grace, not by eating ceremonial foods, which is of no benefit to those who do so. 10 We have an altar from which those who minister at the tabernacle have no right to eat. 11 The high priest carries the blood of animals into the Most Holy Place as a sin offering, but the bodies are burned outside the camp. 12 And so Jesus also suffered outside the city gate to make the people holy through his own blood. 13 Let us, then, go to him outside the camp, bearing the disgrace he bore. 14 For here we do not have an enduring city, but we are looking for the city that is to come. 15 Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise—the fruit of lips that openly profess his name. 16 And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased. 17 Have confidence in your leaders and submit to their authority, because they keep watch over you as those who must give an account. Do this so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no benefit to you.

The Psalm: Psalm 131

My heart is not proud, Lord,
my eyes are not haughty;
I do not concern myself with great matters
or things too wonderful for me.
2 But I have calmed and quieted myself,
I am like a weaned child with its mother;
like a weaned child I am content.
3 Israel, put your hope in the Lord
both now and forevermore.

Notes, Thoughts, Questions

*What does it mean to
be content?
How does God make
you content?*

*Verse to Remember:
Psalm 131:3*

PUT YOUR HOPE IN
THE LORD BOTH NOW
AND FOREVERMORE.

Notes,
Thoughts,
Questions

*Jesus gives us the
ability to live for
others as He has
lived, and died, for us.*

*Find and underline a
part of this hymn
that gives you
comfort and
motivation to serve
others.*

The Hymn: Son of God, Eternal Savior *LSB 842*

Son of God, eternal Savior,
Source of life and truth and grace,
Word made flesh, whose birth among us
Hallows all our human race,
You our Head, who, throned in glory,
For Your own will ever plead:
Fill us with Your love and pity,
Heal our wrongs, and help our need.

As You, Lord, have lived for others,
So may we for others live.
Freely have Your gifts been granted;
Freely may Your servants give.
Yours the gold and Yours the silver,
Yours the wealth of land and sea;
We but stewards of Your bounty
Held in solemn trust will be.

Come, O Christ, and reign among us,
King of Love and Prince of Peace;
Hush the storm of strife and passion,
Bid its cruel discords cease.
By Your patient years of toiling,
By Your silent hours of pain,
Quench our fevered thirst of pleasure,
Stem our selfish greed of gain.

Son of God, eternal Savior,
Source of life and truth and grace,
Word made flesh, whose birth among us
Hallows all our human race:
By your praying, by Your willing,
That Your people should be one,
Grant, O grant our hope's fruition;
Here on earth Your will be done.

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KING
OF LOVE
and
PRINCE
OF PEACE

Faith + Life Connections

Jesus gives practical advice for how we are to interact with others. Talk about the importance of being humble and practicing good manners, such as letting others go first. How did Jesus show humility? How do we show humility before God?

Luke 14:1-14

How can you “show hospitality to strangers?” Can you hold the door at the store? Smile at someone? Pick up the umbrella someone dropped? Offer food to a homeless person? Make a list of ways your family can share God’s love with strangers.

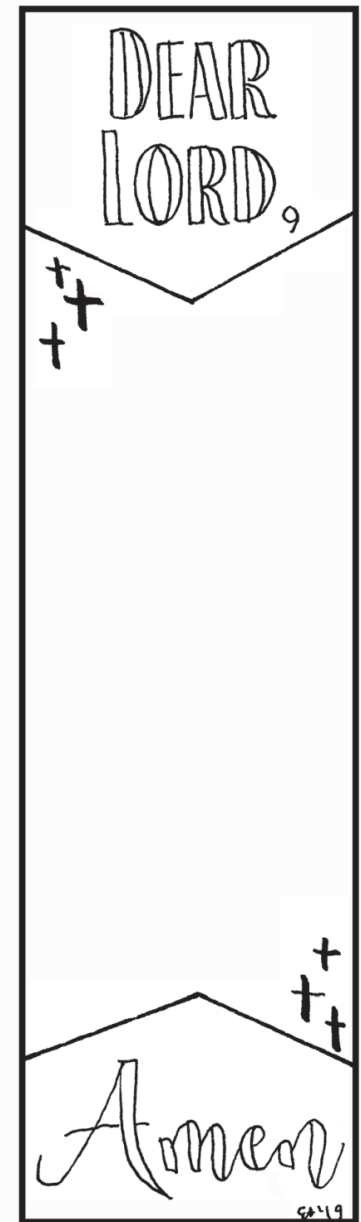
Hebrews 13:1-17

Write or print out “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever” on cardstock and decorate it. Hang it up as a reminder that Jesus’ love for you never changes.

Hebrews 13:8

Verse to Remember
Put your hope in the Lord
both now and forevermore.

Psalms 131:3



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Prayer for the Week

O Lord of grace and mercy, teach us by Your Holy Spirit to follow the example of Your Son in true humility, that we may withstand the temptations of the devil and with pure hearts and minds avoid ungodly pride. In Jesus’ name we pray. Amen.

