THE LIVING WORD OF PENTECOST

A DEVOTIONAL GUIDE

SEASON AFTER PENTECOST Proper 11

This week, many of our Amos texts focus on general themes of justice. Amos was a prophet who spoke God's judgment, especially in reference to injustice toward the poor that was happening under the evil king Jeroboam. Our passages from Amos this week include the well-known passage: ""I hate, I despise your religious festivals; your assemblies are a stench to me. 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. Away with the noise of your songs! I will not listen to the music of your harps. But let justice roll on like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream!" Worship without right behavior, without justice in our communities, without actions taken to correct injustice and increase equity, is offensive to God. We cannot worship God with our lips and ignore Him with our behavior. What a resonant message for the Church today!

Similarly, Psalm 52 offers a picture of what happens to leaders who trust in wealth or power rather than God. The writer describes himself as a green olive tree, secure in the love of God. Similar to Amos, our second passage (Psalm 119:17-32), shows a writer praising God for His laws and rules. We don't always feel compelled to praise God for His rules, but we know that, like the passage in Amos, God's rules and laws help us to live lives where both we and the communities around us can flourish. While Amos is pronouncing a warning for ignoring God's commands, both psalms remind us of the beauty of obedience. This week we also read the Parable of the Sower in Luke 8:4-10, which shows how different types of people respond to God. It is a reminder to us to cultivate good soil, to not let God's words be choked out by the thorns around us. In a world filled with so much distraction, busyness, worry, and overwhelm, this is a needed message to us all.

We also read Paul's prayer for the Ephesians in Ephesians 3:14-21. Paul prayed for the church to be rooted in God's love and to be filled with the knowledge of God's love for them, love that even surpasses knowledge. We still need this type of spiritual strength. *The "yous" in this passage are all plural in the Greek, a reminder that God's power is at work through His people as a whole, not just us individually. We need one another.*

Colossians 1:15-28, 1 John 2:1-6, and Colossians 1:27-2:7 remind us of the supremacy of Christ in all things, especially our salvation. Because of His great supremacy, we live in obedience to Him.



FOR PRAYER & **Reflection**

In Luke, the story of Mary and Martha unfolds like a quiet scene in the midst of ministry storms. Jesus stops at the home of two sisters. Martha, the hospitable one, busies herself preparing a meal, while Mary sits at Jesus' feet. What feels like a minor domestic disagreement becomes a powerful parable about presence and priority.

Jesus' loving rebuke of "Martha, Martha..." isn't a condemnation of service, it is an invitation to stillness in His presence. It's about attention. About having an un-anxious soul.

Psalm 16 gives voice to Mary's choice: "I keep the Lord always before me... In Your presence is fullness of joy." While Martha's anxiety tugs her in many directions, Mary has found the one thing necessary—a life rooted in God's presence.

Martha certainly wasn't doing anything wrong, but she was doing something less essential. And Jesus saw her distracted heart. We are often the same—faithful, perhaps even driven, but slowly worn thin by a self-imposed urgency. What if, like Mary, we pushed pause to delight in the God who is already near?

Psalm 16 reminds us that joy isn't in productivity, or even in spiritual activity, it's in presence. "You make known to me the path of life," the psalmist prays. Not a frantic path, but a steady one, guided by communion with God.

Ask yourself the following questions as you reflect on these texts:

Am I being attentive to the presence of Christ or mostly attending to my own to-do list?

What might it look like for me to choose the "better portion" today—not instead of serving, but before serving?

Can I rest in the truth that joy and security are found in simply sitting at the feet of Jesus?



SCRIPTURE READINGS FOR THE WEEK

Thursday	Psalm 52; Amos 5:10-17; Hebrews 5:1-6
Friday	Psalm 52; Amos 5:18-27; Ephesians 3:14-21
Saturday	Psalm 52; Amos 6:1-14; Luke 8:4-10
Sunday	Amos 8:1-12 and Psalm 52; Genesis 18:1-10a; Psalm 15; Colossians 1:15-28; Luke 10:38-42
Monday	Psalm 119:17-32; Amos 7:1-6; Colossians 1:27-2:7
Tuesday	Psalm 119:17-32; Amos 8:13-9:4; 1 John 2:1-6
Vednesday	Psalm 119:17-32; Amos 9:5-15; John 6:41-51

Why do the daily readings begin on Thursday?

The daily readings for each week begin on Thursday and end on the following Wednesday. The Thursday through Saturday readings prepare the reader for the Sunday ahead. The Monday through Wednesday readings reflect on what was presented on Sunday.

The Morning Liturgy

Opening Scripture

I was glad when they said unto to me, "Let us go into the house of the Lord."

Psalm 122:1

Opening Prayer (based on Psalm 51)

Open my lips, O Lord, and my mouth shall proclaim Your praise. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from Your presence, and take not Your Holy Spirit from me. Give me the joy of Your saving help again and sustain me with Your bountiful Spirit. Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

Scripture Reading (read Psalm and Gospel text here) **Period** of Silence Confessing Our Faith (Apostles' Creed) The Lord's Prayer

The Collect (Proper 11)

O God, the protector of all who trust in You, without whom nothing is strong, nothing is holy: Increase and multiply upon us Your mercy; that, with You as our ruler and guide, we may so pass through things temporal, that we lose not the things eternal; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen.

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A Midday Prayer

Lord Jesus Christ, You said to Your apostles, "Peace I give to you; my own peace I leave with you." Regard not our sins, but the faith of your Church, and give to us the peace and unity of that heavenly City, where with the Father and the Holy Spirit you live and reign, now and forever. *Amen.*

An Early Evening Prayer

Lord Jesus, stay with us, for evening is at hand and the day is past; be our companion in the way, kindle our hearts, and awaken hope, that we may know You as You are revealed in Scripture and the breaking of bread. Grant this for the sake of Your love. *Amen.*

A Bedtime Confession and Prayer

Almighty and most merciful Father, we have erred and strayed from thy ways like lost sheep, we have followed too much the devices and desires of our own hearts, we have offended against Thy holy laws, we have left undone those things which we ought to have done, and we have done those things which we ought not to have done. But Thou, O Lord, have mercy upon us, spare thou those who confess their faults, restore thou those who are penitent, according to Thy promises declared unto mankind in Christ Jesus our Lord; and grant, O most merciful Father, for His sake, that we may hereafter live a godly, righteous, and sober life, to the glory of Thy holy Name.

Visit this place, O Lord, and drive far from it all snares of the enemy; let Your holy angels dwell with us to preserve us

in peace; and let Your blessing be upon us always; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.



Image: The Baptism of The Holy Spirit | Artist: Rebecca Brogan | www.jtbarts.com