# THE LIVING WORD OF PENTECOST

A DEVOTIONAL GUIDE JULY 24 - JULY 30

# SEASON AFTER PENTECOST Proper 12

This week's lectionary readings draw us into a powerful narrative of divine mercy, covenant relationship, bold prayer, and spiritual renewal. The readings in Hosea present one of the most startling prophetic images in Scripture. Hosea's unexpected marriage to Gomer becomes a living parable of Israel's unfaithfulness to God. But even in the middle of judgment and estrangement, the final note is hope: "In the place where it was said to them, 'You are not my people,' it shall be said to them, 'Children of the living God.'" God's love remains persistent, despite human failure.

Psalm 85 echoes this theme, combining confession with longing for restoration. It recalls God's past faithfulness and looks forward to renewal. It is a vision of God's justice and mercy working together to restore His people and their land.

Genesis 18:20-32 shows Abraham interceding for Sodom—a model of bold and compassionate prayer. Abraham's plea reveals God's openness to mercy, even toward a city steeped in wickedness. It reminds us that God listens, and that faithful intercession matters.

Psalm 138 is a song of thanksgiving that celebrates God's steadfast love and faithfulness. Even when walking "in the midst of trouble," we can trust in God's deliverance and purpose. God sees us and fulfills His plans for us.

Colossians 2:6-15 (16-19) encourages believers to remain rooted in Jesus, who has triumphed over darkness. Paul reminds the Church that through Christ's death and resurrection, we are made alive, forgiven, and free

from condemnation. The cross disarms every accusation, calling us to live confidently in grace.

Luke 11:1-13 brings the theme of prayer to the forefront. Jesus teaches His disciples to pray with simplicity, trust, and persistence. The Lord's Prayer becomes a framework for life with God, centered on daily dependence, forgiveness, and kingdom hope. Jesus reassures us: the Father gives generously, even the Holy Spirit, to those who ask. In his treatise *On Prayer*, Origen reflects on the Lord's Prayer as a spiritual ascent: "He who prays as he ought, and uses the prayer which was taught by the Savior, will be heard not only because of the merit of his prayer but also because he joins his prayer to that of Jesus. For what prayer could be more efficacious than that which was given to us by the Word Himself?" Praying as Jesus taught helps us enter a deeper communion with God through Christ, whose own prayer life we are invited to share. The Lord's Prayer is both our pattern and our participation in Jesus' own relationship with the Father.

Read together, these readings invite us into a deeper awareness of God's mercy, a stronger rootedness in Jesus Christ, and a more courageous, honest life of prayer. They also remind us that *God's faithfulness reaches even into our unfaithfulness, His justice is tempered by mercy, and His presence is never withheld from those who seek Him.* 

# FOR PRAYER & **Reflection**

God gave Hosea the difficult but incredible task of letting his life be a display for God's never-ending redemptive love. In a similar way, disciples of Jesus have been given the task of letting our lives be a display of His second-chance love. While your life may not be recorded like a reality TV show as Hosea's was, God has given you an audience to whom you are called to communicate His love.

This is a difficult calling. That's why Paul urged the Church to keep it simple: "As you received Jesus Christ as Lord, continue to live your lives in Him" (Colossians 2:6). In other words, "the way you started with Jesus as Lord is the way to keep living in Him." How do we start? We give up on sin and give in to Jesus. We lay down our pride and humbly admit our powerlessness without God. We accept that Jesus knows what He's talking about and we are foolish without His wisdom.

How do we live out this difficult but incredible calling? See above. Our lives will be a display of Jesus' love as we continue to receive Him, continue to depend on Him, and continue to apply His logic to our habits and schedules.

It is tragic how many people live unaware of the immensity of God's love and the nearness of His deliverance. But it is incredible that God has sent us to raise awareness so that they may experience His second-chance love and receive Jesus Christ as Lord. As you go about your days this week, keep it simple and follow Jesus' pattern of prayer in Luke 11. Participate with Him in His redemption plan for yourself and those around you.



# SCRIPTURE READINGS FOR THE WEEK

Thursday	Psalm 85; Hosea 4:1-19; Acts 1:15-20
Friday	Psalm 85; Hosea 5:1-15; Acts 2:22-36
Saturday	Psalm 85; Hosea 1:11-2:15; Luke 8:22-25
Sunday	Psalm 85; Hosea 1:2-10; Genesis 18:20-32; Psalm 138; Colossians 2:6-15, (16-19); Luke 11:1-13
Monday	Psalm 44; Hosea 2:14-3:5; Colossians 2:16-3:1
Tuesday	Psalm 44; Hosea 6:1-10; Romans 9:30-10:4
Vednesday	Psalm 44; Hosea 6:11-7:16; Matthew 5:43-48

#### 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**

Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be always acceptable in Your sight, O Lord, my strength and my redeemer. *Psalm 19:4* 

#### **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 12)

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.

## A Midday Prayer

Blessed Savior, at this hour You hung upon the cross, stretching out Your loving arms: Grant that all the peoples of the earth may look to You and be saved; for Your mercies' sake. *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

Most merciful God, we confess that we have sinned against You in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done, and by what we have left undone. We have not loved You with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We are truly sorry and we humbly repent. For the sake of Your Son Jesus Christ, have mercy on us and forgive us; that we may delight in Your will, and walk in Your ways, to the glory of Your Name.

Amen.

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