



THE LIVING  
WORD  
OF  
THE SEASON AFTER  
**PENTECOST**

A DEVOTIONAL GUIDE

October 30 - November 5



# SEASON AFTER PENTECOST

## Proper 26

***Have you ever been frustrated by attempts to talk to God, sensing maybe, just maybe, He isn't really paying attention?*** The prophet Habakkuk accused God of this very thing when he called for help yet sensed He wasn't listening. He accused God of not saving people who needed to be rescued, of having too high a threshold of tolerance for wrongdoing, and then the determined prophet positioned himself to wait for God to answer his complaints. God did and essentially said, "Wait on me."

Habakkuk 2:3 says, "Wait for it; it will certainly come and will not delay." Wait. I (God) am in charge. My plan and purposes will prevail in my perfect timing. I find it fascinating to pause and notice how God flips the conversation from Habakkuk's line of sight to God's point of view (probably because I need this rather often in my own life).

I wonder if the prophet wanted to reply with what the psalmist says in Psalm 119:139, "My zeal wears me out, for my enemies ignore Your words". You see, Habakkuk wanted to make it about them. God wanted to make it about Him.

Let's be perfectly honest with each other. The faith journey can be fatiguing at times. With evil, heartache, stress, and distress in the world, sometimes it just seems to well up around us and it feels like we're being swallowed up by what isn't working (unable to see what is working). But we must choose to see things from God's point of view. He is righteous. His laws are right. He is trustworthy. His promises are reliable. He is everlasting.

So, when distress and trouble are closing in? Look to God's Word. "His commands give us delight" (Ps.119:143), then pray, "Give me understanding" (Ps.119:144).

Isaiah 1:10-18 reveals that we'll have the opportunity to hear His word, listen to His instructions, and discover something new. When we talk with God, He is more concerned about us as a pray-er (a person) than He is with all the

words we have to say. So, it's not just what's going wrong "out there," but what's going wrong "in here," in our own hearts. We can talk and talk and talk about what is broken with the world, but if there is evil in our own hearts, sin that remains unconfessed, wrong we keep doing, well it's time to "settle the matter," says the Lord (v. 18).

Psalm 32 beautifully helps us grasp the blessing of forgiveness, a gift that shifts our perspective tremendously. If we can be forgiven, then we can forgive others. We can have more understanding (because we are delighting in God's Word). We can feel safe and at peace in His presence. Our prayer time becomes more about our relationship as we grow together. It's God caring about us as a person and it's us caring about God's plan and purposes. It's all of this converging into a sacred and precious (forever!) relationship.

Our reading in Thessalonians helps us learn how to pray for each other: giving thanks, faith to grow more and more, love to increase, perseverance. Then Luke 19 invites us to, yet again, consider whether we're living life from our point of view or choosing God's viewing point, when someone who was largely unseen (unwelcome and unloved) is seen by Jesus. Zaccheus is invited into a personal relationship and we observe yet another life changed for eternity by the goodness and grace of God who "came to seek and save the lost" (the very ones we were complaining about at the beginning of the week).

May we individually and collectively surrender more and more of our line of sight to God's point of view. And let's keep looking to His Word while praying for understanding.



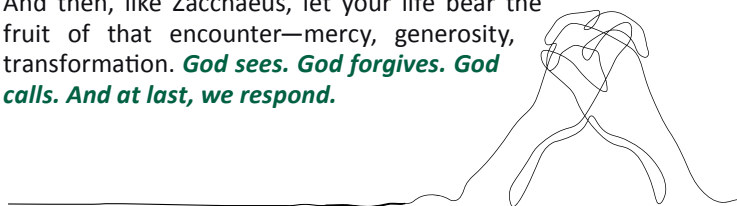
# FOR PRAYER & REFLECTION

*There is a peculiar weight in carrying what we wish no one knew.* In Psalm 32, the psalmist puts words to that heaviness: “When I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long.” Yet God’s grace is already at work. To let the truth of our failure fall into God’s hands is like breathing again: “Blessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven ... when I acknowledged my sin to You, You forgave the guilt of my sin.” There is joy in being seen—not shame or judgment, but steadfast love holding all of us.

Then Luke 19 shows Zacchaeus perched high in the sycamore tree, hiding, curious, afraid. Jesus looks up, names him, and calls him down: “Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today.” The movement is surprisingly intimate. Jesus does not wait for Zacchaeus to clean himself up first and does not leave him dangling in the branches of his fear or shame. He sees. He calls. And in being seen, Zacchaeus moves—down from the tree, into the presence of mercy, into the joy of restoration, into a life that will bear fruit in generosity and repentance.

There is a rhythm here. One that psalm and gospel share: hiddenness, the ache of our failings, recognition, the tender gaze of God piercing our hiding, and movement outward—confession, repentance, turning toward what is good, possible only because the One who sees does so with love.

In your quiet, in your moments of hesitation, remember: God delights to find you where you are. Let yourself come down. Let yourself be known. Let yourself be forgiven. And then, like Zacchaeus, let your life bear the fruit of that encounter—mercy, generosity, transformation. ***God sees. God forgives. God calls. And at last, we respond.***





# SCRIPTURE

## READINGS FOR THE WEEK

|                  |                                                                                                                    |
|------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Thursday</b>  | Psalm 119:137-144; Jeremiah 33:14-26; 2 Corinthians 1:1-11                                                         |
| <b>Friday</b>    | Psalm 119:137-144; Habakkuk 1:5-17; 2 Peter 1:1-11                                                                 |
| <b>Saturday</b>  | Psalm 119:137-144; Habakkuk 2:5-11; John 8:39-47                                                                   |
| <b>Sunday</b>    | Psalm 119:137-144; Habakkuk 1:1-4; 2:1-4; Psalm 32:1-7; Isaiah 1:10-18; 2 Thessalonians 1:1-4, 11-12; Luke 19:1-10 |
| <b>Monday</b>    | Psalm 142; Habakkuk 2:12-20; 1 Corinthians 5:9-13                                                                  |
| <b>Tuesday</b>   | Psalm 142; Habakkuk 3:1-16 ; Jude 1:5-21                                                                           |
| <b>Wednesday</b> | Psalm 142; Habakkuk 3:17-19; Luke 19:11-27                                                                         |

### ***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 thy sight, O Lord, my strength and my  
redeemer.

*Psalm 19:14*

## 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 26)*

*Almighty and merciful God, it is only by Your gift that Your  
faithful people offer You true and laudable service: Grant  
that we may run without stumbling to obtain Your heavenly  
promises; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns  
with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.*

*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.*





