

THE LIVING
WORD
OF
THE SEASON AFTER
PENTECOST

A DEVOTIONAL GUIDE

October 9 - October 15



SEASON AFTER PENTECOST

Proper 23

The centerpiece of our readings this week is the gospel story of Jesus healing ten lepers, but only one giving thanks. Once again, like in the story of the Good Samaritan from a few months back, the hero in this story (not a parable) is a man from outside the “right” sort of people, who responds in the correct way. Despite ten men being healed, only one takes the time to thank Jesus for what He has done for him. The outsider is the one who behaves in the way that you would expect from an insider.

Our passages this week also include another story of a leper being healed in Luke 5. In that story, even though Jesus had told the man to keep quiet, he couldn’t keep from sharing the good news of his miraculous healing.

God’s people are meant to show great care to foreigners and outsiders because they have experienced being exiles firsthand. There is a passage from one of our psalms, Psalm 66, that specifically calls this out:

***For You, God, tested us;
You refined us like silver.
You brought us into prison and laid burdens on our backs.
You let people ride over our heads;
we went through fire and water,
but You brought us to a place of abundance.***

For several weeks now, we have examined passages in the Book of Jeremiah that warn of the coming punishment of exile in Babylon. Jeremiah has continuously foretold this event, including passages

from Chapter 25 in this week's reading. But then, this week, we come upon a curious passage (Jeremiah 29:1, 4-7) where the Israelites are encouraged to plant gardens in Babylon. This might seem strange, since Babylon has represented a looming threat up until this point. But here we discover that God wants His people to thrive and grow, even in exile. This is a reminder to us, even today, to seek the good of the places where we live. We do not live in a chosen land, but we are to look out for our neighbors, live our lives, and represent God well.

Psalms 102 is a refrain of someone experiencing exile. God hears our pleas. Though we are in a different situation than the Israelites, these verses nonetheless reveal that God listens to His people when they cry out to Him.

We face real challenges in this world, but God's Word reminds us we are ultimately in a battle "against rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms" (Ephesians 6:12). Our weapons are not the weapons of this world; instead, we fight back with prayers, truth, righteousness, peace, salvation, and faith. What a great reminder that we are not to meet evil with evil, but instead with spiritual "weapons" that God gives to His people.



FOR PRAYER & REFLECTION

What is one thing I can do when I get up in the morning? “I will thank the Lord with all my heart.” What is one thing to do midday? “I will thank the Lord with all my heart.” What is one thing to do at the end of my day? “I will thank the Lord with all my heart.”

Why? Because it is the framework for our hearts found in Psalm 111:1 (NLT): “Praise the Lord! I will thank the Lord with all my heart.”

Sometimes gratitude bubbles up quickly within us. Other times it is more challenging to recall, which is why these prompting phrases from Psalm 111:2 are helpful:

***How amazing are the deeds of the Lord!
All who delight in Him should ponder them.***

Pause for a moment to think about God’s expansive deeds throughout history. The awe of creation. Stories in scripture. Legacies of faith carried down from generation to generation. Reflect on the gift of Jesus’ birth. Miracles performed throughout His lifetime. Hope we have because of His life, death, and resurrection.

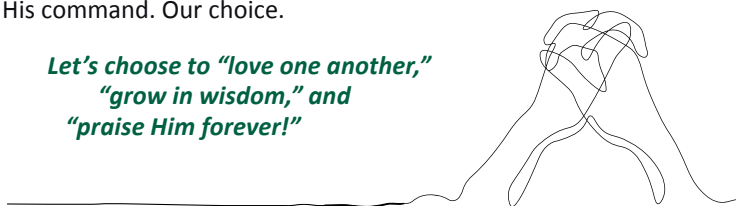
***Everything He does reveals His glory and majesty.
His righteousness never fails. (Psalm 111:3)***

***The fear of the Lord is the foundation of true wisdom.
All who obey His commandments will grow in wisdom. Praise Him forever. (Psalm 111:10)***

One way to display gratitude and grow in wisdom is by obeying His commands—perhaps beginning with the last one Jesus gave us? “Love one another.” (John 13:34)

His command. Our choice.

***Let’s choose to “love one another,”
“grow in wisdom,” and
“praise Him forever!”***





SCRIPTURE

READINGS FOR THE WEEK

Thursday	Psalm 66:1-12; Jeremiah 25:1-14; 2 Timothy 1:13-18
Friday	Psalm 66:1-12; Jeremiah 27:1-22; 2 Timothy 2:1-7
Saturday	Psalm 66:1-12; Jeremiah 28:1-17; Luke 5:12-16
Sunday	Psalm 66:1-12; Jeremiah 29:1, 4-7; 2 Kings 5:1-3, 7-15c; Psalm 111; 2 Timothy 2:8-15; Luke 17:11-19
Monday	Psalm 102:1-17; Jeremiah 29:8-23; Acts 26:24-29
Tuesday	Psalm 102:1-17; Jeremiah 29:24-32; Ephesians 6:10-20
Wednesday	Psalm 102:1-17; Jeremiah 25:15-32; Matthew 10:5-15

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

Thus says the high and lofty one who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy, "I dwell in the high and holy place, with Him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones."

Isaiah 57:15

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 23)*

Lord, we pray that Your grace may always precede and follow us, that we may continually be given to good works; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.



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.

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.



