# THE LIVING WORD OF THE SEASON AFTER PENTECOST

A DEVOTIONAL GUIDE
September 11 - September 17

# SEASON AFTER PENTECOST

### **Proper 19**

This week is a rather heavy collection of passages, with many of them sharing a theme of judgment and punishment.

In Jeremiah 13, Israel faces impending punishment. To our modern ears, the language and word choice in this passage is a bit shocking. God's people are about to experience exile because of their lack of faithfulness to God. The lectionary this week bounces around a bit in the book of Jeremiah. After opening in chapter 13, we go back to chapters 4 and 5, then move forward to chapter 14. Israel has broken their covenant with God, and Jeremiah the prophet continually warns them.

Despite the warning that the northern invaders will come, Jeremiah also gives a message of hope. They are given ample warnings to return to God but they do not heed His message. Our final Jeremiah passage includes a promise that despite the coming judgment and exile, God still offers hope: "Yet even in those days," declares the Lord, "I will not destroy you completely. And when the people ask, 'Why has the Lord our God done all this to us?' you will tell them, 'As you have forsaken me and served foreign gods in your own land, so now you will serve foreigners in a land not your own.'"

One of our Jeremiah passages includes a reference to false prophets, and our New Testament passages for the week also reference false teachers. 2 Peter promises that God can inflict judgment on the unjust and still rescue those who follow Him. What a reminder to us that God still keeps us, even when things around us may look bleak.

Psalm 14, then, is a poignant reminder that God "looks down from Heaven" to find people who are seeking after Him. God sees us and we will find Him when we seek Him. Consider how *The Message* paraphrases the final verses of Psalm 14:

Is there anyone around to save Israel?
Yes. God is around; God turns life around.
Turned-around Jacob skips rope,
turned-around Israel sings laughter.

Psalm 94 reminds us that we don't have to fear God's judgment. God is a God who cares about injustice, who will judge wicked oppressors. We have a defender God who is a rock and refuge for us in times of trouble. We live in a time with a lot of anxiety, but Psalm 94 reminds us: "When anxiety was great within me, Your consolation brought me joy."

So, in these times, we hold on to our faith as our 1 Timothy passage reminds us, because God is full of abundant mercy and immense patience.

# FOR PRAYER & REFLECTION

If you have ever lost and searched for a loved one in a supermarket, theme park, or neighborhood, you know the feeling that God has for every human that has ever lived. In the parables of the lost sheep and coin, Jesus tells us that there is joy in heaven over "one sinner who repents" (Luke 15:7, 10). When Paul says that "Jesus came into the world to save sinners—of whom I am the worst" (1 Timothy 1:15), he points at the reality that Jesus came for him like the widow searching for the coin and the shepherd looking for the sheep.

Jesus came to save sinners like me and you. The Jeremiah reading for this week shows how sin is anti-creation, an unmaking of what is good. When we live without God, we become "skilled at doing evil" (Jeremiah 4:22). Psalm 14 complains that when people live as if there is no God, "they are corrupt" and "their deeds are vile" (14:1). Denying God's existence is not only perilous but burdensome because it shifts ultimate authority and responsibility to my shoulders instead of God's. But the good news is that Jesus came to save us from the corrupt and anti-creative ways of sin.

As you go about your week, I invite you to reflect on the two levels of Jesus' parables. For the sinners at the table, Jesus was saying, "God is searching for you." For the religious leaders, Jesus was saying, "Will you share God's joy?"

Will you accept God's search for you?

Will you share in God's enjoyment of welcoming other sinners?





# SCRIPTURE

READINGS FOR THE WEEK

**Thursday** 

Psalm 14; Jeremiah 13:20-27; 1 Timothy 1:1-11

**Friday** 

Psalm 14; Jeremiah 4:1-10; 2 Peter 2:1-10a

Saturday

Psalm 14; Jeremiah 4:13-21, 29-31; John 10:11-21

Sunday

Psalm 14; Jeremiah 4:11-12, 22-28; Exodus 32:7-14; Psalm 51:1-10; 1 Timothy 1:12-17; Luke 15:1-10

Monday

Psalm 94; Jeremiah 5:1-17; 1 Timothy 1:18-20

Tuesday

Psalm 94; Jeremiah 5:18-31; 2 Peter 3:8-13

Wednesday

Psalm 94; Jeremiah 14:1-10, 17-22; Luke 22:31-33, 54-62

#### 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 19)

O God, because without You we are not able to please You, mercifully grant that Your Holy Spirit may in all things direct and rule our hearts; 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.

