

THE LIVING
WORD
OF
PENTECOST

A DEVOTIONAL GUIDE

July 16 - July 22



SEASON AFTER PENTECOST

What kind of brother tricks his hungry older brother into selling his birthright (Gen 25)? What kind of son deceives his blind father into giving him the blessing that belonged to his older brother too (Gen 27)? He was right to be named “heel-grabber” aka “deceiver.” And when we meet him in the Old Testament text for Sunday, we find him running from the troubles he caused.

But God is such a gracious God. It was to this deceiving son and manipulative brother that God gave the vision of the stairway to heaven (Gen 28:10-19). It was to this troublemaking rascal that God gave the revelation that echoes through the centuries: “Surely the Lord is in this place, and I was not aware of it!”

Jacob was like all of us before we repent. He had allowed selfish impulses to direct his actions, living unaware of the with-ness of God and unsubmitted to God’s rule. But God patiently waited for this dark moment to capture Jacob’s attention. ***He is the God to whom “even the darkness will not be dark” (Ps 139:12).*** Into Jacob’s self-imposed nightmare, the Lord spoke an illuminating promise and Jacob’s heart was inspired to allegiance to the Lord.

While Jacob’s grand revelation could be described as “God is with us,” one grand revelation from the New Testament reading for Sunday is that “God is within us.” Jacob realized that he was surrounded by God, and in Romans 8:12-25 Paul insists that we are filled by God’s Spirit. While Jacob received promises about his future children and the land they would possess (Gen 28:13-15), the Spirit “testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children” (Rom 8:16) and helps us as we wait for the “redemption of our bodies” (v. 23). In other words, ***believers in Jesus Christ are filled with the Holy Spirit who actively gives the present benefit of being adopted as God’s children and the future hope of being liberated from decay and death.***

Do you know that inner tension at the end of the workday when you still have work to do but you also need to get home? There is a similar tension within this



reading from Romans and the Gospel text of Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43. In the parable of the wheat and weeds Jesus offered an imaginative way of presently living in the kingdom of heaven and preparing for the future in the kingdom of the Father. He privately explained the parable to his disciples, sharing that until “the end of the age” (v. 39) there would be a mix of “people of the kingdom” and “people of the evil one.”

It may be tempting to relieve that tension by picking up the judge’s gavel and identifying the “weeds” in our communities, but I believe this parable invites disciples to live in the tension and leave the judgment to God. There will be judgment in the end, and what a relief that we are not the Judge. What a blessing that the Judge is the same God who patiently waits for the trouble-making sinners like Jacob and me and you to come awake to his redemption!

FOR reflection

Psalm 139:23-24 offers a prayer on which to meditate. Take time to be searched, known, tested and led by God this week. Slowly pray these words from Psalm 139:23-24:

Search me, God, and know my heart; Test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, And lead me in the way everlasting.





SCRIPTURE

READINGS FOR THE WEEK

Thursday

Psalm 139:1-12, 23-24; Isaiah 44:1-5; Hebrews 2:1-9

Friday

Psalm 139:1-12, 23-24; Ezekiel 39:21-29; Hebrews 6:13-20

Saturday

Psalm 139:1-12, 23-24; Exodus 14:9-25; Matthew 7:15-20

Sunday

Psalm 139:1-12, 23-24; Genesis 28:10-19a; Psalm 86:11-17;
Song of Solomon 12:13, 16-19 or Isaiah 44:6-8;
Romans 8:12-25; Matt. 13:24-30, 36-43

Monday

Psalm 139:13-18; Genesis 32:3-21; Revelation 14:12-20

Tuesday

Psalm 139:13-18; Genesis 33:1-17; Galatians 4:21-5:1

Wednesday

Psalm 139:13-18; Genesis 35:16-29; Matthew 12:15-21

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 came unto 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.

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.





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