

THE LIVING
WORD
OF
PENTECOST

A DEVOTIONAL GUIDE

July 23 - July 29

SEASON AFTER PENTECOST

Psalm 119:129-136 is worth learning by heart. It's a passage of Scripture worth cherishing and meditating on over the course of your entire life.

There are passages of the Bible that feel familiar and there are passages that are luminous. Psalm 119 is both. It's the testimony of someone who has discovered that God's Word is never exhausted. The more it's read, prayed, obeyed, and lived, the more it opens itself like a flower to the morning sun.

Throughout this psalm, the writer speaks of God's **testimonies**—his faithful witness to who he is; his **statutes**—which are his enduring decrees; his **precepts**—his careful instructions for daily living; his **commandments**—his authoritative words; and his **law**—gracious instruction that teaches us how to live. Together, they remind us that God has not been silent. He has spoken, and his speech is life.

The stanza begins with a simple confession: "Your testimonies are wonderful; therefore, my soul keeps them" (v. 129). Remember, obedience actually begins with wonder. The psalmist keeps God's Word because he has seen something beautiful. The unfolding of God's words "gives light" (v. 130), not all at once, but slowly, patiently, over a lifetime. Scripture teaches us how to see. It gives understanding to "the simple"—not those who know everything, but those humble enough to simply receive it. That awakening creates a deeper thirst.

"I open my mouth and pant," the psalmist says, "because I long for your commandments" (v. 131). This is the language of desire. A soul that has tasted God's Word wants more of it. Spiritual maturity isn't marked by having fewer longings, but by discovering the One for whom those longings were always meant.

Then comes a prayer that echoes one of the oldest blessings in Scripture: "Turn to me and be gracious to me ..." (v. 132). A few verses later the psalmist prays, "Make your face shine upon your servant ..." (v. 135). We cannot hear those words without remembering the Aaronic blessing: "The Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you." The psalmist longs to live beneath the warmth of God's smiling face.



Yet what he asks for next is striking: “Keep steady my steps according to your promise and let no iniquity get dominion over me” (v. 133). Sin always seeks dominion. It wants our allegiance. The psalmist knows that real freedom is belonging wholly to God, so his prayer is “Do not let it rule me.”

He also prays, “Redeem me from man’s oppression” (v. 134). Redemption is never only rescue from something, it is rescue for something—that we might walk freely in God’s ways.

This text ends with tears: “My eyes shed streams of tears, because people do not keep your law” (v. 136). These are tears of love. The psalmist has seen enough of God’s goodness to know what is lost whenever his Word is ignored. They are, in their own way, the tears of Jesus over Jerusalem.

Perhaps the powerful invitation of this passage is to recover our sense of wonder. To ask God to steady our steps. To live beneath the light of his shining face. And to love his Word so deeply that our hearts begin to break over the things that break his.

FOR reflection

Where in your life has God’s Word become familiar instead of wonderful? What might it look like to approach Scripture again with the expectancy of someone listening for the voice of a beloved friend?

What is quietly seeking dominion in your life today? How might God’s promises steady your steps before any lesser master gains a foothold?





SCRIPTURE

READINGS FOR THE WEEK

Thursday	Psalm 105:1-11, 45b; Genesis 29:1-8; 1 Corinthians 4:14-20
Friday	Psalm 105:1-11, 45b; Genesis 29:9-14; Acts 7:44-53
Saturday	Psalm 105:1-11, 45b; Genesis 29:31-30:24; Matthew 12:38-42
Sunday	Psalm 105:1-11, 45b or Psalm 128; Genesis 29:15-28; Psalm 119:129-136; 1 Kings 3:5-12; Romans 8:26-39; Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52
Monday	Psalm 65:8-13; Genesis 30:25-36; James 3:13-18
Tuesday	Psalm 65:8-13; Genesis 30:37-43; Ephesians 6:10-18
Wednesday	Psalm 65:8-13; Genesis 46:2-47:12; Mark 4:30-34

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