



THE LIVING
WORD
OF
PENTECOST

A DEVOTIONAL GUIDE

June 18 - June 24

SEASON AFTER PENTECOST

In Matthew 10:38, Jesus says, “Whoever does not take up their cross and follow me is not worthy of me.” That is not exactly the kind of call to discipleship that will enlist the masses. If you want to recruit a bunch of followers, shouldn’t you highlight the rewards, how much fun the work will be, or how personally meaningful it will prove?

But Jesus doesn’t do any of that as he sends out his disciples. In this week’s Sunday Gospel text, Matthew 10:24-39, Jesus lays out the hardships that accompany discipleship:

- *They will be accused of allegiance with demons (v. 25).*
- *Their bodies might be killed (v. 28).*
- *They will be tempted to disown Jesus (v. 33).*
- *They will be at odds within their own families (vv. 34-38).*
- *They will be forced to carry a cross (v. 38).*
- *They will be asked to lose their life (v. 39).*

This theme of hardship and rejection reverberates in many of this week’s readings. Psalm 86 is a plea for help. Hebrews 2 reminds us that Jesus “tasted death for everyone.” Acts 5 tells us that the apostles were arrested for their ministry.

Anyone who is new to the Christian faith needs to know that the life of walking with Jesus is not always easy. That does not mean it isn’t good, full of joy, or worthy of doing. The German pastor Dietrich Bonhoeffer famously said, “When Christ calls a man, he bids him come and die.”

Jesus called his disciples, gave them authority to minister, and sent them to represent him. His followers go out as “sheep among wolves.” The mission is dangerous and costly, yet the Lord tells his disciples in Matthew 10 that they will be cared for both in this age and the one to come:

- *Like the sparrows, they will be cared for by the Father (v. 29) who knows the number of hairs on their head (v. 30).*
- *They will find the life they lost for the gospel (v. 39).*



Do modern Christians fully understand the implications of following Jesus? When, for instance, was the last time you were insulted, rejected, or persecuted for your decision to follow Jesus?

Our world is not always receptive to the message of Jesus or his people, but in the current climate in the United States, it is relatively safe to be a Christian. People are not being imprisoned or murdered regularly for their faith. That is not true in nations that are hostile to Christianity.

Are we prepared to take up our cross and to lose our life if Jesus so leads us? Jesus says that only worthy servants are willing to say a bold “Yes!” to that question.

FOR reflection

As you read and meditate on God’s Word this week, ask the Holy Spirit, your Helper, to build the courage and faith in you to prepare you to say “Yes!” to wherever he leads you.





SCRIPTURE

READINGS FOR THE WEEK

Thursday	Psalm 86:1-10; Exodus 12:43-49; Hebrews 2:5-9
Friday	Psalm 86:1-10; Genesis 35:1-4; Acts 5:17-26
Saturday	Psalm 86:1-10; Ezekiel 29:3-7; Luke 11:53-12:3
Sunday	Psalm 86:1-10, 16-17; Psalm 69:7-18; Genesis 21:8-21; Jeremiah 20:7-13; Romans 6:1b-11; Matthew 10:24-39
Monday	Psalm 86:11-17; Genesis 16:1-15; Revelation 2:1-7
Tuesday	Psalm 86:11-17; Genesis 25:12-18; Revelation 2:8-11
Wednesday	Psalm 86:11-17; Jeremiah 42:18-22; Matthew 10:5-23

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

The Lord is in his holy temple; let all the earth keep silence before him.

Habakkuk 2:20

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 7)

*O Lord, make us have perpetual love and reverence for your holy Name, for you never fail to help and govern those whom you have set upon the sure foundation of your loving-kindness; 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