

THE LIVING
WORD
OF
THE SEASON AFTER
PENTECOST

A DEVOTIONAL GUIDE

October 15 - October 21

SEASON AFTER PENTECOST

Proper 24

Since the time of Jesus, his followers have wrestled with how we relate to the governments of the countries in which we live. In Jesus' time, the Jewish people were living in an occupied land, dealing with Roman oppressors.

Our central gospel text this week is from Matthew 22:15-22. Like many of the passages we've read in the past few weeks, Jesus is once again being questioned by the religious leaders in an attempt to entrap him. This time, he is questioned about paying imperial taxes to Caesar. Jesus reminds them that Caesar's face is on the coin and says, "So give back to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's."

This well-known statement still confounds us. There are things in our lives that are lawfully under the rule of our governmental leaders, but Jesus also points out that there are higher things, beyond the reach of the government, that belong to God.

Navigating thorny issues between church and state still confuses us. We know that our ultimate allegiance and loyalty belong to a kingdom that is not of this world, yet we navigate living under earthly leaders (good and bad) and laws we may agree or disagree with, discerning how to work for justice and mercy wherever we reside. (Our passages this week include the wild story of King Herod's terrible use of power in the murder of John the Baptist, who was beheaded while in prison. Talk about a horrible leader!)

Psalm 99 offers additional commentary on church and state, opening with: "The Lord reigns, let the nations tremble ..." *God is holy and just and good. Wouldn't it be wonderful if all leaders and rulers worked for their people with that starting thought in mind?*



Tucked away in this week's passages are the instructions from Exodus for the building of the tent of meeting. Pay special attention to the importance of artists to the creation of the tent.

In our texts this week we see Moses, who is a good leader, experience God's glory. He also experiences the jealousy of his siblings, Aaron and Miriam, before sending scouts into the land of Canaan. How much better our world would be if all leaders sought to hear what God tells Moses: "I will do the very thing you have asked, because I am pleased with you and I know you by name."

FOR *reflection*

How do you respond to Jesus' famous statement:

***"Give back to Caesar what is Caesar's,
and to God what is God's"?***

***In our present day, what do we owe to our
government? What do we owe to God?***



SCRIPTURE

READINGS FOR THE WEEK

Thursday	Psalm 99; Exodus 33:7-11; 3 John 9-12
Friday	Psalm 99; Exodus 31:1-11; 1 Peter 5:1-5
Saturday	Psalm 99; Exodus 39:32-43; Matthew 14:1-12
Sunday	Psalm 99; Exodus 33:12-23; Isaiah 45:1-7; Psalm 96:1-13; 1 Thessalonians 1:1-10; Matthew 22:15-22
Monday	Psalm 63:1-8; Exodus 40:34-38; Revelation 18:1-10, 19-20
Tuesday	Psalm 63:1-8; Numbers 12:1-9; Revelation 18:21-24
Wednesday	Psalm 63:1-8; Numbers 13:1-2, 17-14:9; Matthew 17:22-27

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

Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

Philippians 1:2

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 24)*

Almighty and everlasting God, in Christ you have revealed your glory among the nations: Preserve the works of your mercy, that your Church throughout the world may persevere with steadfast faith in the confession of your Name; 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.



