

THE LIVING
WORD
OF
THE SEASON AFTER
PENTECOST

A DEVOTIONAL GUIDE

October 1 - October 7

SEASON AFTER PENTECOST

Proper 22

This week's readings invite us deeper into the patterns and rhythms of God's good creation as we open our eyes and ears to his ever-present guidance, grace, and love.

In Sunday's reading from Exodus 20, the Ten Words from Mt. Sinai establish the central rhythm of our lives. The first four words, or commandments, set the rhythm of our lives with God (vv. 2-9). The next six words set the rhythm of our lives with each other (vv. 12-17). Together, these two sets, or tablets, of instruction unite into a single Law to guide all of life: Love God and love your neighbor.

Psalm 19 celebrates this Law by setting it alongside the patterns and rhythms of the natural world. After opening our eyes and ears to God's glory in creation in the first half of the psalm, the psalmist moves seamlessly to the Law of Sinai in the second half by declaring, "The law of the Lord is perfect" (v. 7). Once again, these two sets, or tablets, of instruction unite into a single song that guides all of life. According to the psalmist, our lives declare God's glory in creation as we are formed by the patterns and rhythms of God's Law.

In Sunday's reading in the Gospel of John, Jesus portrays the tragic consequence of plugging our ears and shutting our eyes to God's life-giving patterns and rhythms. In the Parable of the Wicked Tenants, we cringe in horror as a set of selfish stewards pretend they are unaccountable to any guidance, grace, or love outside of themselves. The climax of their blindness and deafness occurs when they kill the landowner's living presence in the form of his own son.

In Philippians 3, Paul contrasts the willful grasping of some wicked tenants with his own decision to count "everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord" (v. 8). Learning to relinquish, not grasp, becomes the key to "knowing Christ and the power of his resurrection" (v. 10). Over the course of our lives, the more we learn to relinquish our claims to pride, honor, and privilege, the more room we leave for Christ's resurrection life in us.

On Thursday through Saturday:

- Exodus 23 extends the logic of the Ten Words into the patterns and rhythms of neighbor love (vv. 1-9), annual festivals (vv. 14-19), and our use of natural resources (vv. 10-13).



- Colossians and Philippians caution against those who try to use patterns and rhythms of religious life as bludgeons or weapons against others. Leaning into the patterns and rhythms of God's life-giving Law is not the same as being forced into a restrictive mold (Phil 3:1-4).
- In John 7, we witness in sorrow as the shocking Parable of the Wicked Tenants begins to take on flesh and blood when Jesus becomes a stumbling block to the appointed stewards of God's people (vv. 40-52).

On Monday through Wednesday:

- Deuteronomy 5 recounts the giving of God's Law by emphasizing how it speaks to every generation of God's people (v. 3) and serves as a source of lasting flourishing (v. 33).
- 1 Peter 2 transforms the image of a "stumbling block" into a "living Stone" and promises that we will be "built into a spiritual house" as we learn to follow Jesus (vv. 4-10).
- In 2 Corinthians 5, Paul frames our "ministry of reconciliation" as the natural pattern and rhythm of new creation established by our own reconciliation with God (vv. 17-21).
- In John, the fate of God's Son is sealed by the willful refusal of faithless stewards to open their eyes and ears to the Landowner's glory in their midst.

FOR reflection

How do you live out the command to love God and love your neighbor on a daily basis? Is one more difficult than the other? Pray that God would open your eyes to places where you need to let go of pride and allow Christ to work through you.



SCRIPTURE

READINGS FOR THE WEEK

Thursday	Psalm 19; Exodus 23:1-9; Colossians 2:16-23
Friday	Psalm 19; Exodus 23:14-19; Philippians 2:14-18; 3:1-4a
Saturday	Psalm 19; Exodus 23:10-13; John 7:40-52
Sunday	Psalm 19; Exodus 20:1-4, 7-9, 12-20; Isaiah 5:1-7; Psalm 80:7-15; Philippians 3:4b-14; Matthew 21:33-46
Monday	Psalm 119:49-56; Deuteronomy 5:1-21; 1 Peter 2:4-10
Tuesday	Psalm 119:49-56; Deuteronomy 5:22-6:3; 2 Corinthians 5:17-21
Wednesday	Psalm 119:49-56; Deuteronomy 6:10-25; John 11:45-57

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

Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks.

John 4:23

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 22)*

Almighty and everlasting God, you are always more ready to hear than we to pray, and to give more than we either desire or deserve: Pour upon us the abundance of your mercy, forgiving us those things of which our conscience is afraid, and giving us those good things for which we are not worthy to ask, except through the merits and mediation of Jesus Christ our Savior; 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.



