

THE LIVING
WORD
OF
THE SEASON AFTER
PENTECOST

A DEVOTIONAL GUIDE

September 24 - September 30

SEASON AFTER PENTECOST

Proper 21

Have you ever experienced a turning point in your life? Maybe you were on one trajectory, a path that seemed to be headed in one direction, and suddenly everything changed?

In our gospel text this week, many scholars believe that Jesus' interaction with the religious authorities was likely a turning point where he couldn't go back. He points out that his authority comes from above and tells them that the tax collectors and the prostitutes—the ultimate sinners!—will be entering the kingdom before them, because of their belief.

Sometimes I feel sorry for the religious authorities of Jesus' day, trying to do the right thing, trying to protect the institutions and ways of worshipping, and missing that God is doing a new thing right before them. Jesus compares them to the son who promised to do the work but doesn't actually get anything done.

Another of our texts this week from the Book of Philippians reminds us that Jesus Christ humbled himself, even to the point of death. The greatest act the world had ever seen was about to happen and the religious authorities were missing it.

Many of our passages this week deal with this theme of authority. Matthew 9 shows us that Jesus had the authority to heal and forgive sins.

Authority is a difficult thing. Maybe you naturally submit to those in authority over you, or maybe you are a bit of a rebel, questioning all the time. No matter what is natural for you, all Christians must submit to Christ's authority.



Sometimes that's difficult. Perhaps you look at the world around you and wonder how exactly God is planning on making things right. Maybe you struggle to submit to God's authority when things in your life have taken such strange and hurtful turns.

Perhaps our psalms this week can be of some comfort. In Psalm 78, God's people look to his great works in the past to remind them of God's power. How has God been at work in your life in the past? How can remembering these stories help you to submit in the future?

FOR *reflection*

***Psalm 42 reminds us to hope in God.
If you are struggling to submit to God's
authority, make this your prayer this week:***

***Why, my soul, are you downcast?
Why so disturbed within me?
Put your hope in God,
for I will yet praise him,
my Savior and my God.***



SCRIPTURE

READINGS FOR THE WEEK

Thursday	Psalm 78:1-4, 12-16; Isaiah 48:17-21; James 4:11-16
Friday	Psalm 78:1-4, 12-16; Numbers 20:1-13; Acts 13:32-41
Saturday	Psalm 78:1-4, 12-16; Numbers 27:12-14; Mark 11:27-33
Sunday	Psalm 78:1-4, 12-16; Exodus 17:1-7; Ezekiel 18:1-4, 25-32; Psalm 25:1-9; Philippians 2:1-13; Matthew 21:23-32
Monday	Psalm 42; Exodus 18:1-12; Philippians 1:3-14
Tuesday	Psalm 42; Exodus 18:13-27; Philippians 1:15-21
Wednesday	Psalm 42; Exodus 19:9b-25; Matthew 9:2-8

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 21)*

O God, you declare your almighty power chiefly in showing mercy and pity: Grant us the fullness of your grace, that we, running to obtain your promises, may become partakers of your heavenly treasure; 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.



