

Here's a 5-day Bible reading plan and devotional guide based on the themes from Pastor Paul Pett's sermon from Sunday, September 20, 2026, the Seventeenth Sunday After Pentecost:

5-Day Bible Reading Plan and Devotional Guide

Theme: Standing Firm in Christ -- Courage, Confidence, and the Gospel

Day 1: The Gospel Cannot Be Chained

Reading: [Philippians 1:12-14](#) -- Paul declares that his imprisonment has not silenced the gospel but has instead caused it to advance, even reaching those who guard him.

Devotional: The enemy's strategy is always to silence the gospel through fear, isolation, or opposition. Yet God consistently turns every attempt at suppression into an opportunity for proclamation. Paul wrote letters from a prison cell. His jailers heard the word of Christ. His fellow believers grew bolder because of his chains. What circumstance in your life feels like a prison today? Consider that God may be using that very limitation to advance his purposes in ways you cannot yet see. The chains do not belong to the gospel. They never have.

Reflection: Where in your life has God turned a setback into a platform for his glory?

Practical Application: Write down one difficult circumstance you are currently facing and ask God to show you how he might be working through it for the sake of his kingdom.

Day 2: To Live Is Christ, To Die Is Gain

Reading: [Philippians 1:21-24](#) -- Paul expresses his confident conviction that whether he lives or dies, his existence is entirely bound up in Christ, and that to depart and be with him would be far better.

Devotional: Paul does not fear death because he knows what waits on the other side. He does not cling desperately to life because he understands that his life is not his own -- it belongs to Christ. This is not recklessness. It is the deep, settled confidence of a man who has staked everything on the resurrection. Because Christ died and rose, death lost its final word. Because Christ lives, so shall we. When death no longer holds power over you, you are free to live fully, boldly, and without reservation for the one who gave everything for you.

Reflection: Does the thought of death produce fear or confidence in you? What does your answer reveal about where your trust is truly placed?

Practical Application: Spend time in prayer asking God to deepen your confidence in the resurrection, and reflect on what it would mean to live today as though eternity were already secured.

Day 3: Courage Caught From Others

Reading: [Philippians 1:14](#) -- Paul notes that most of the believers, having seen his faithfulness under imprisonment, became far more bold and fearless in speaking the word of God.

Devotional: Courage is contagious. When one person refuses to be silenced, when one believer stands firm under pressure, something stirs in those who are watching. Paul did not have to write a manual on boldness. He simply lived it, and others caught fire. The same is true in every generation. The martyrs of the early church did not silence Christianity - they multiplied it. The faithful witness of a parent, a teacher, or a fellow believer has changed the trajectory of countless lives. Your faithfulness is never only about you. Someone is always watching, and your courage may become theirs.

Reflection: Who in your life has modeled bold, faithful witness? How did their example shape your own faith?

Practical Application: Reach out this week to someone whose faith has encouraged yours and tell them specifically how their example has made a difference in your life.

Day 4: A Life Worthy of the Gospel

Reading: [Philippians 1:27](#) -- Paul urges the believers to conduct themselves in a manner that is worthy of the gospel of Christ, standing firm together in one spirit and striving side by side for the faith.

Devotional: The gospel is not merely a message we receive. It is a reality that reshapes the entire manner of our living. Paul calls believers to a life that matches the weight and glory of what Christ has done. Forgiveness, resurrection, and eternal life are not small things. They demand a response that goes beyond Sunday attendance. They call for transformed priorities, renewed relationships, and a willingness to stand when standing is costly. The gospel has given us everything. A life worthy of it gives back in kind -- not to earn what is already given, but because of the one who gave it.

Reflection: In what areas of your daily life does your conduct most clearly reflect the gospel? Where does it fall short?

Practical Application: Identify one specific habit, attitude, or relationship that needs to be brought into alignment with the gospel and take one concrete step toward that change this week.

Day 5: Standing Firm Without Fear

Reading: [Philippians 1:27-28](#) -- Paul calls the church to stand firm in one spirit, striving together for the faith of the gospel and not being frightened by any form of opposition, which is a sign of salvation from God.

Devotional: Fear is the weapon the enemy most reliably deploys against the people of God. It whispers that the threat is too large, the cost is too high, and the odds are too long. But Paul writes to a church facing real opposition and tells them plainly: do not be frightened. This is not a call to ignore danger. It is a call to stand in the face of it, grounded in the knowledge that God himself is the source of their salvation. The same Christ who conquered the grave stands with his people in every moment of opposition. That is not a small comfort. That is an unshakable foundation.

Reflection: What specific fear most threatens your willingness to stand firm in your faith right now?

Practical Application: Memorize Philippians 4:13, which speaks of being able to do all things through Christ who strengthens you, and recite it each morning this week before you face the day.