

# **HOPE-FULL LIVING**

▪ Daily Devotions for Living Life to the Fullest ▪

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## **Hope-Full Living Mission Statement**

To inspire God's seniors with the assurance that "This very day, I have a body, a mind, a spirit and a message—God's rejuvenating Gospel message to and through me—to share with my world, my friends and my Lord."

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WEDNESDAY, JULY 1, 2020

# Songs in the Night

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Then our mouth was filled with laughter, and our tongue with shouts of joy.

*Psalm 126:2*

Remember those old campfire songs? Maybe you still sing them as you huddle around a fire on a summer's night. Happy songs and silly songs! Ballads and Bible songs! Fun, memorable moments with family and friends.

Beyond the fun of a campfire is the joy we have in the Lord. By his creative power, he's given us water and wind, fire and earth. He's formed mountains and hills, the waters and prairies. And by his grace, he's given his Son for our forgiveness of sin, for life in him forever.

Will you sing around a campfire this week? Sing a song of joy and gladness to the gracious God who made you and keeps you. Be glad in the Lord—even if your “campfire” is only a light next to your bed.

*Jim Elsner  
Auburn, IN*

**Lord,** I rejoice in your creative power and grace that has made me righteous. Keep me upright in heart. Amen.

**Do:** Sing a campfire song like “Kumbaya” or “What a Friend We Have in Jesus.”

**Read:** John 21:1-14; Psalm 32

THURSDAY, JULY 2, 2020

# EncourAGEment!

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For the LORD takes pleasure in his people; he adorns the humble with salvation. Let the godly exult in glory; let them sing for joy on their beds.

*Psalms 149:4-5*

Aging is the only way to live! The Lord must love older people because he sure is making more of us! Let us affirm that the Lord takes pleasure in people of all ages as we continue to encourage both the younger and the older around us.

EncourAGEment is one of the many gifts the Lord has given us. He puts us into families and congregations to build up one another, to serve and celebrate together. Perhaps it is time for us to encourage our churches to work harder at re-connecting people of all ages, in order to learn, love and lift each other up. We need God's people of all ages around us to love and support.

*Rich Bimler  
Bloomington, IL*

**Lord,** continue to encourage us to rub "ministry shoulders" with those younger than ourselves. Bring us back together, in your name. Amen.

**Seek out:** Seek out some younger people in the days ahead and invite them for lunch.

**Read:** Romans 15:5; Colossians 2:2



FRIDAY, JULY 3, 2020

# King Solomon's Garden

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Jesus said, "And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life?"

*Luke 12:25*

"Consider the lilies, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in his glory was not arrayed like one of these" (Luke 12:27). After the spring rains, the lily grew in King Solomon's garden a symbol of loveliness. How much more valued are you?

God loves you more than the lilies of the fields. Jesus spread his arms out on the cross to redeem everyone, guaranteeing life everlasting! "Seek his kingdom and these things will be added to you. It is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom" (Luke 12:31-32).

*William Biester  
Mesa, AZ*

**Lord,** thank you for reminding us of your love in the flowers we see every day and the continued presents that surround us. When we are anxious, remind us that in even a minute of anxiety, we lose 60 seconds of your beauty. Amen.

**Smell:** Take a walk and stop to smell a flower or two.

**Read:** Song of Solomon 2:12; 1 Kings 6:29

SATURDAY, JULY 4, 2020

# Abundant Blessings

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They celebrate your abundant goodness and joyfully sing of your righteousness.

*Psalm 145:7*

On this July 4, Americans celebrate the 244th birthday of our nation. We thank God for the abundant goodness he has poured out on our nation and its people through the years.

Every day we should thank God for the abundant blessings he showers on us and our loved ones, many of which we take for granted. Some days it may seem easier to count our troubles than our blessings. But when we look back, we realize we have been blessed beyond measure. And when we look forward, we know that our blessings in heaven will truly be endless.

Many people we know don't realize or acknowledge from whom our blessings flow. It is our privilege and responsibility to tell of his mighty acts to the next generations (verse 4).

*Gil Duchow  
Muskego, WI*

**Gracious God,** "every day I will praise you, and extol your name forever and ever" (verse 2). Amen.

**Witness:** Plan ways to share your faith with the next generations.

**Read:** Psalm 145



SUNDAY, JULY 5, 2020

# Special

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Because you are precious in my eyes, and honored,  
and I love you ...

*Isaiah 43:4*

My 10th birthday party was a big deal! (Since there were 8 of us kids at this point, including my then-one-month-old baby brother, we could have a special party on our 10th birthday.) I could invite 10 friends to the party, where we would play baseball on our make-shift ball field behind our farmhouse. Dad would bar-be-que chicken, and Mom would make a flag cake—since I'm a July 4th baby. I had the best time with classmates, neighbors and family on my day.

God wants us to know how special we are to him. Through the prophet he spells it out, assuring us how precious, honored and loved we are. He gave his Son to redeem us, and he promises us a home in heaven.

*Steve Hess  
Ft. Myers, FL*

**Father,** I rejoice today because you are with me always. Amen.

**Share:** Encourage someone today to rejoice in knowing that God is with us.

**Read:** Psalm 103; Isaiah 43:1-21

MONDAY, JULY 6, 2020

# Dispersion

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Why are you cast down, O my soul ... ?

*Psalm 42:5*

When I make sugar water for the hummingbirds, I use a few drops of red food coloring. Often, I watch the color disperse in the water and wonder: Is this how the Holy Spirit spreads in our consciousness, in our souls? If so, how long might it take?

Some time in midlife, I began to notice that where I was in life was where God meant for me to be. Still, resistance surfaces. I continue to have that desire to change myself, other people or circumstances in spite of knowing it's up to God.

Yes, the Holy Spirit is coloring my thoughts, like the food coloring in the sugar water, and the whole process would be easier if I stop wanting my way. Thank God for his patience and forgiveness! I rejoice because his Spirit permeates my soul and teaches me "all things" (John 14:26).

*Judy Scherr  
Lemay, MO*

**Dear** God, you forgive over and over because Jesus paid for my sins. Help me rejoice in your grace. Amen.

**Try:** Make some sugar water for the hummingbirds, and let the small things make your day.

**Read:** Psalm 42:5-11, John 14:16-17, 25-27



TUESDAY, JULY 7, 2020

# Weary or Cheery?

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Come to me, all you who are weary and heavy burdened, and I will give you rest.

*Matthew 11:28*

Notice closely that the Lord did not say, “Come to me, all who are happy, healthy and hearty, and I will give you rest.” Who needs the Lord if everything is going perfectly well?

But everything is not “well” in your life or mine, is it? Disappointments, best friends dying, another hip pain are only some of the rough spots we face.

What great gospel words we hear instead from our Lord when he states, “Come to me, all who are weary and I will give you rest”! What a Lord! What a Savior!

When we feel discouraged, wiped out, tired and just plain weary, don't worry. That is exactly how Jesus wants us to be as he carries his message of forgiveness and love to us and through us to others.

*Rich Bimler  
Bloomingdale, IL*

**Lord**, thanks for coming to us weary people to proclaim your love for us every day in Jesus' name. Amen.

**Go:** Whether you feel weary or cheery today, know that the Lord loves and forgives us.

**Read:** Matthew 28:19-20; Proverbs 12:25

WEDNESDAY, JULY 8, 2020

# A Hiding Place

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For he will hide me in the day of trouble.

*Psalm 27:5*

There are times when each of us feels the need to hide—to escape from an anxious relationship or from all that we ought to do. The Psalms abound in references to hiding. He will “hide me in the shadow of [his] wings” (Psalm 17:8). As gently as a mother bird shelters her young in tender protection, we are granted safety in the care of our gracious Lord.

We understand that God’s shelter, his hiding place, is not really a place at all, but the realization of his constant care and presence. How often we need to seek that refuge. How often we forget that it is there for us.

*Constance Bretscher  
Valparaiso, IN*

**Dear God,** give me help in your hiding place that we may find peace and protection in you. Amen.

**Look:** Look for hiding places in nature and thank God for his protection.

**Read:** Psalm 27:5, 6; Psalm 32:7, 11, 19



THURSDAY, JULY 9, 2020

# Cultivate the Ground

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Other seeds fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants.

*Matthew 13:7*

There are times when we experience precious moments with God. Something miraculous happens in our life or we hear a testimony of God's care. For that moment we are reminded of how safe and secure we are in the Father's love. He is close. Our faith is strengthened.

But the next day or maybe the next, everyday life happens with its own cares and challenges, diverting our attention. We begin to focus on the trouble, and lose that precious moment. Before we recognize it, we're living in the old habitual way.

Jesus is with us always. Let's pay attention and treasure what he is saying. Cultivate the soil. Let the seeds of precious moments grow into firm, enduring faith.

*Lynne Waite Chapman  
Fort Wayne, IN*

**Father,** you have promised to be with me always. Thank you for the precious times when you remind me how close you are to me. Amen.

**Journal:** Write down what the Lord teaches you. Review often.

**Read:** Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23; Mark 9:24

FRIDAY, JULY 10, 2020

# A Very Good Place to Start

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In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

*Genesis 1:1*

The beginning of a new day, the beginning of the Bible, the new chance to start over—God works with new beginnings. Let's make the commitment to read God's Word each day. Let's hear what he has to say to us regarding it. Pray first, asking God to open our eyes to see his message, to make it personal, to apply it to our lives. Our life will change as our intimacy with God grows closer. Others will notice God working through us to touch the world with his love. To God be the glory!

*Kay Charon  
Glen Cove, NY*

**Lord,** what greater privilege do we have than to start the new day off in your will through the merit of Jesus Christ our Lord. Thank you!

**Meditate:** Meditate on the readings, apply them to your life with God's help and share them with others.

**Read:** Genesis 1; John 1.

SATURDAY, JULY 11, 2020

# Darkness and Light

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People living in darkness have seen a great light.

*Matthew 4:16*

Some of us mature adults have a problem with darkness. Perhaps we need to get up in the middle of the night, grab our walker and make our way to the bathroom. We couldn't make it without a night light. A little light in the darkness comforts us and makes us safer!

We all were "in the dark" from birth, but thank God, we have "seen the light." Born into the darkness of sin, we needed light to show us the way in this life and eternally. God sent us the light to deliver us from the darkness. Jesus Christ, God's Son, came into this world and said, "I am the light of the world." St. Paul explains that you and I have been "rescued from the dominion of darkness" (Colossians 1:13). We are never again in the dark!

Next, Jesus says, "You are the light of the world ... let your light shine before others" (Matthew 5:14, 16). We shine with the light of Christ.

*Chuck Conner  
Festus, MO*

**Thank you, Father,** for sending your Son. Amen.

**Sing:** Sing "This Little Gospel Light of Mine."

**Read:** Matthew 5

SUNDAY, JULY 12, 2020

# Around the Corner

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God is greater than our heart, and he knows everything.

*1 John 3:20*

Playing hide-and-seek with cousins on a hot summer night was one of the great joys of childhood. We didn't notice heat or mosquitoes—only the thrill of making it to base before being tagged. I recall thinking it was safe to come out of hiding and run toward the base, only to be tagged unexpectedly. When I complained I hadn't seen the one who tagged me, he told me where he'd been hiding. I realized I didn't see him because I couldn't see around corners.

My husband died suddenly after only 3 years of marriage. I struggled to make sense of that and understand what I was supposed to do next. My friend reminded me God already knew those answers. I confessed I wanted to know them also. She said, "You can't see the future, but God can see around corners." That was a precious reminder to me that God can indeed see around corners, even though I can't.

*Gloria Doty  
Fort Wayne, IN*

**Jesus,** remind me to trust you. Amen.

**Help:** Help someone who is struggling to understand that God knows everything.

**Read:** Psalm 139



MONDAY, JULY 13, 2020

# Summer Break

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Be glad in the LORD, and rejoice, O righteous, and shout for joy, all you upright in heart!

*Psalm 32:11*

When school is out, most children rejoice and shout for joy. They have been looking forward for weeks to summer break, with all kinds of exciting possibilities ahead. Most seniors look forward joyfully to the blessings of summer, such as warm sunshine, long, pleasant evenings, concerts in the park, extra time with grandchildren, and maybe some gardening or traveling.

Summer is also a good time for spiritual renewal, when we spend more time with our Lord in his Word, in prayer and reflecting on our blessings. One of our greatest blessings is that we have been declared righteous in God's sight, because of the complete forgiveness that our perfectly righteous Savior earned for us on the cross.

*Gil Duchow  
Muskego, WI*

**Lord Jesus,** I praise you for your countless blessings. Show me ways that I can share your blessings with others. Amen.

**Ponder:** Think of new ways you can share the joy and love of Jesus with others around you.

**Read:** Psalm 32

TUESDAY, JULY 14, 2020

# Stay Up; Look Up

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He determines the number of the stars; he gives to all of them their names.

*Psalm 147:4*

Last July, I sat at night with my sons and son-in-law, looking at the stars. We beheld the glory of God. Shooting stars! Planets! Constellations! Satellites! The International Space Station (it's bright!) zoomed by right over our heads. I will treasure that evening with my kids, and the display of God's glory, the rest of my life. We gloried in the glory of our God.

July 28 and 29 this year mark the peak of the Delta Aquariids Meteor Shower. Our God is amazing, awesome and glorious. No wonder the heavens declare his glory. Stay up one night this month. Look up one night this month. Invite someone to join you. Behold the glory of God! Praise him.

*Don Schatz  
Lynnwood, WA*

**Glory to you,** Lord of the skies. Amen.

**Look up:** Behold the night sky and rejoice!

**Read:** Psalm 19:1-5; Psalm 89:5-8



WEDNESDAY, JULY 15, 2020

# The Yard

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Shout for joy and be glad and say evermore, "Great is the LORD, who delights in the welfare of his servant!"

*Psalm 35:27*

It was more yard than we wanted in retirement. But, like a blank canvas before an artist, we could plant the trees, shrubs and garden as we chose. Our designs for a raised garden bed, a bird feeding area and small groups of trees are taking shape even as you read this. To benefit our welfare, we want our yard to be a place of activity and enjoyment in nature.

Where's the place that benefits your welfare? Your yard? A walking trail? Maybe a beach or a hill with a grand vista? Here you can be refreshed and renewed as you reflect on the goodness and grace of God. He who gave his Son for the eternal welfare of our souls also gives us an oasis in the midst of life. Shout for joy today! Be glad in the great God who delights in your welfare!

*Jim Elsner  
Auburn, IN*

**O Lord,** renew and refresh me by your goodness and grace in Jesus. Amen.

**Try:** While in your beneficial place, thank God for that place and its features.

**Read:** Matthew 14:13-23; Psalm 35:27-28

THURSDAY, JULY 16, 2020

# July as in Joy

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The LORD has done great things for us and we are filled with joy.

*Psalm 126:3*

July is a month of JOY, not only because the weather is better or school is out or families are visiting, but because the Lord continues to do great things for us—right now! Listen and look for the sights and sounds of “joy” in your life today—it may be a laughing child, a friendly phone call, a smile from a neighbor or a rested body.

Joy is not something we do or manufacture on our own. Joy is the gift of knowing in faith that we are redeemed through Christ’s death and resurrection. It is hard to spell J-O-Y with an “I.” Joy in the Lord always begins with the “J” of Jesus!

*Rich Bimler  
Bloomington, IL*

**Lord**, thanks for bringing your JOY into our lives, as our sadnesses are turned into gladnesses in you. Amen.

**Reflect:** Reflect on a recent experience when the Lord brought his joy and hope to you.

**Read:** Psalm 43:4; Psalm 45:15



FRIDAY, JULY 17, 2020

# Hydrate

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You are my God, earnestly I seek you; I thirst for you ...  
in a dry and parched land where there is no water.

*Psalm 63:1*

There's nothing like an ice-cold glass of Coca-Cola on a hot day to quench my thirst. At least, that's what my tongue thinks as the crisp bubbles linger after a sip. Yet, I know it's just a trick. The truth is, the caffeinated beverage dehydrates my body, leaving me more parched. I need a glass of water to truly quench my thirst.

When trials in life leave us feeling parched, we often reach for the wrong things to satisfy our needs. While not all vices are bad, we can easily be fooled into believing they can satisfy our needs. Meanwhile, our faith can become dehydrated. Only Jesus, our Living Water, can quench our thirsty souls and give us strength. So hydrate! Earnestly seek Jesus in all things.

*Sandi Geis  
St. Louis, MO*

**Jesus**, help me to thirst for you. Revive me with the Living Water only you can provide. Amen.

**Drink:** When thirst strikes, reach for a glass of water along with a few verses of Scripture.

**Read:** John 4:1-14; Isaiah 58:11-12

SATURDAY, JULY 18, 2020

# With the Morning

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Weeping may tarry for the night, but joy comes with the morning.

*Psalm 30:5*

During a storm or at bedside in a hospital room, you may long for daylight as the hours of the night seem to stretch on forever. Even if the morning light does not bring joy, at least it may allow room for a bit of hope. Jesus' followers no doubt wept through the long hours of darkness after that first Good Friday, and into the Sabbath as well. But joy came on the first Easter morning! Perhaps with that joy came the memory of Jesus' promise: "In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world" (John 16:33).

We have Jesus' promise and presence shining day and night in every dark corner of life and, when he returns, he will banish forever this earthly night of suffering. Weeping will give way to the joyful dawn of an eternal day where there is "fullness of joy" (Psalm 16:11).

*Carol Geisler  
Orange, CA*

**Lord**, fill us day and night with the joy of your presence. Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

**Give:** Share the comfort of Jesus' gracious promises with those who mourn in darkness.

**Read:** Psalm 16; John 16:25-33



SUNDAY, JULY 19, 2020

# Salty Character

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You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored?

*Matthew 5:13*

Are you a salty character? Let's consider the flavor of such status.

First, we normally associate salt with what people our age most often associate with restraint. It brings out the flavor in foods but also the pressure in our arteries! In the context of today's Bible reading, perhaps we can think of it as spicing up our practice of faith with signs of joy, hope, enthusiasm and relish of his Word. After all, Jesus is the spice of our life!

Second, Jesus pronounced the saltiness of his followers at a time when salt was probably more of a preservative than a spice. It is Jesus, through the Holy Spirit, who preserves your faith. Your task now is to preserve his message so others believe and grow.

*Ed Grube  
Addison, IL*

**Dear Jesus,** thank you for making me a salty character. Preserve my faith and help me to preserve your Word for others. Amen.

**Consider:** How, in your present circumstances, can you demonstrate your saltiness?

**Read:** Matthew 5:1-16; Colossians 4:2-6

MONDAY, JULY 20, 2020

# Forgiveness Sets You Free

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So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.

*John 8:36*

I didn't know the man's name until the day he murdered my uncle. Despite his crime, the court cleared him of all charges and set him free. Bitterness and unforgiveness grew in my heart, and I struggled to sleep.

Then I read the story of the rich man and Lazarus. I realized that while my uncle's murderer had escaped earthly punishment, no fast-talking lawyer would be able to protect him from the justice that awaited him in eternity. He needed God's gift of salvation and forgiveness just like I had. Although I'd never murdered anyone, my sins had also separated me from God. Without God's forgiveness, I'd be equally lost.

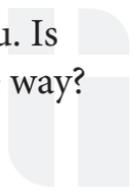
"Because you have forgiven me," I told God, "I forgive him." In time, I was able to pray that he would also find God's forgiveness.

*Lori Hatcher  
Lexington, SC*

**Father**, enable me to forgive others. Amen.

**Learn:** Ponder the way God has forgiven you. Is there anyone you need to forgive in the same way?

**Read:** Luke 16:19-31; Ephesians 4:29-32



TUESDAY, JULY 21, 2020

# Fan the Flame!

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I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God ...

*2 Timothy 1:6*

My dad installed a Franklin wood-burning stove in the living room of our old farmhouse. I enjoyed watching its flame through the glass window and feeling its warmth as I sat on the couch. As long as we kept feeding the fire with more wood, it provided us warmth.

Paul reminds Timothy to “fan into flame the gift of God” which he had received. God has given each of us gifts and abilities to help others in their faith journey. Not everyone receives the gift to preach or teach, but your gift of generosity or mercy or administration may be just what your friend might need today for what they are facing. Let’s fan into flame our God-given gifts!

*Steve Hess  
Ft. Myers, FL*

**Thank you, Father,** for reminding me to use the gift you have given me to give help and hope to others. Amen.

**Ignite:** Ask God to use your special gift from him to help someone today.

**Read:** Psalm 25; 2 Timothy 1:3-14

WEDNESDAY, JULY 22, 2020

# Always? Really?

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Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice.

*Philippians 4:4*

Really, God? You can't be serious about ALWAYS rejoicing. There are just too many things wrong in this world today. How can we possibly rejoice over anything these days?

But then, you did see my family through that difficult time financially in 2008. And my new knee works so well. My neighbors were so gracious in helping me out when I had surgery. They brought me meals, and I really felt loved. Our new pastor is a great preacher. When I go to church, I really feel like worshipping you and giving thanks.

Maybe I do have reason to rejoice ... every day and always!

*Margaret Rickers Hinchey  
Ft. Myers, FL*

**Gracious God**, thank you for giving me reason to rejoice every day in every way! Amen.

**List:** Make a list of items to rejoice in during the coming week.

**Read:** Romans 12:12; Psalm 40:16



THURSDAY, JULY 23, 2020

# Leaky Cisterns

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They ... hewed out cisterns for themselves, broken cisterns that can hold no water.

*Jeremiah 2:13*

In the thirsty months of July and August in the Midwest, we typically experience some drought. Spiritually, Jeremiah is talking about God's people, Israel, committing two evils: "forsaking" their God, "the fountain of living waters" (Jeremiah 2:13) and relying on their own devices. They would fail without their God.

We are blessed with the gift of living water, our Lord and Savior Jesus. When our spirits are in drought, our relief is in knowing that God in his grace gave us Jesus. Scripture teaches that in him every day is a day to rejoice, to praise our God for being faithful to his promise. He rescued Israel over and over again; he forgives us daily; he promises us there will be light after darkness. Even from the pits that King David so often wrote about in the psalms, there is a way out. Our God is gracious.

*Judy Scherr  
Lemay, MO*

**Our God**, fill our hearts with your light. Amen.

**Imagine:** Imagine an oasis in the desert cheered many an ancient traveler.

**Read:** Isaiah 12:1-6; John 4:1-15

FRIDAY, JULY 24, 2020

# Grow as a Person

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And Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man.

*Luke 2:52*

I still remember how angry I felt when a coworker managed to snatch the best projects while I was away from my desk. My boss had little empathy. “This is your opportunity to grow as a person!” He often challenged me, “How might you act more wisely?”

Jesus taught us to love even when experiencing petty conflict. Have you ever prayed someone else would share, then realized they might actually need more? Or did you plead that a friend would be more flexible and eventually notice you could be less stubborn? Taking another look at our own character can result in more cheerful associations with others.

*Lisa Heule  
Littleton, CO*

**Lord**, thank you for helping me to act wisely and in your favor. Amen.

**Appreciate:** Reflect on a time God helped improve a relationship.

**Read:** James 3:16-18; Ephesians 4:32



SATURDAY, JULY 25, 2020

# I've Got the Joy

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Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice.

*Philippians 4:4*

“I’ve got the joy, joy, joy, joy down in my heart.”

Okay. Sometimes, I’ve got it. What about you? When your body doesn’t let you do what you once did or pain greets you every morning, have you got it? We sometimes say, “I want the joy, but it’s just not there!”

But there’s good news for both of us today—great news. We have the joy because we have Jesus. Paul, in our verse today, assures us that the joy that matters most is possible: “Rejoice in the Lord always.”

How? By focusing on “in the Lord.” Jesus walks beside us, carries us when we are too tired to walk and promises us eternity in heaven. There’s your joy, my joy.

As you remember what you have always—the presence of God—you can always say, “I’ve got it! I’ve got the joy!”

*Randal Jeppesen  
Medford, WI*

**Loving Lord**, remind me every day that I’ve got it because you make it possible. Amen.

**Begin:** Begin each day saying, “This is the day that the Lord has made. I will rejoice and be glad in it.”

**Read:** Psalm 118:19-24

SUNDAY, JULY 26, 2020

# Joy Comes

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... looking to Jesus ... who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross ...

*Hebrews 12:2*

Imagine what Jesus must have known as he envisioned your life here with him and your life to come with him in heaven. He saw your every moment of triumph from learning to ride a bike to the smiles of others toward you. He also saw your struggles, knowing that you would never be alone in them because of what he would do on the cross. Jesus saw your past and your future with joy.

Why “joy”? Joy defined as glad-to-be-with-me is the relational sense found in the Bible. The word *rejoice* is used 3657 times there! Since the prefix *re-* means *again*, we are promised joy again and again. As we follow Jesus faithfully, we experience his presence in the mornings and the evenings of our lives, again and again. Happiness comes and goes; joy endures steadfastly.

*Julaine Kammrath  
Aurora, IL*

**Lord,** I am amazed that my life could bring you so much joy. May it bring joy to me! Amen.

**Recall:** Recall times when you have known God’s presence with you.

**Read:** Philippians 4:4; Psalm 30:5



MONDAY, JULY 27, 2020

# Rejoicing Bones

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Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones you have broken rejoice.

*Psalm 51:8*

I've only had one broken bone in my life. I was playing softball in P.E. and slipped on the grass as I was rounding first base. I landed on my right wrist, and it broke. As I recall, I didn't do much rejoicing. In fact, as the doctor set the bone that afternoon, I can remember a bit more screaming and even crying. I didn't cry much, because twelve-year-old boys are too tough to cry.

In our lives, spiritual anguish can cause us to feel broken. When we are broken by our sin, we don't usually rejoice. We usually weep and become guilt-ridden. Our Great Physician of the soul doesn't let us stay broken. He sets that broken soul straight with his love and forgiveness. Then we can truly rejoice!

*Jeremy Klaustermeier  
Warrenton, MO*

**Lord,** set my broken soul straight with your forgiveness. Amen.

**List:** Make a list of all the ways God has set your soul straight in the last 24 hours and rejoice!

**Read:** Psalm 51; 1 John 1:6-10

TUESDAY, JULY 28, 2020

# Be Kind

---

Love is patient, love is kind.

*1 Corinthians 13:4*

I was talking with a group of people at a party, and one man said he thought kindness was going to become the “new” way to break down peoples’ resistance to hearing the gospel. As society becomes more fragmented, people have become rushed and angry and rude. Individuals feel unimportant and forgotten, so kindness means a lot to those who face a barrage of loneliness and emptiness.

For the Christian, kindness is rooted in true love—God’s love. We love others because he first loved us. We are compelled by the Spirit to be kind.

Begin to look for ways to be kind. A smile, an encouraging card or a phone call to a friend can be a small thing to us but an answer to prayer for others. And St. Paul promises, they will know we are Christians by our love.

*Katherine Klemp Kreuger  
St. Paul, MN*

**Lord,** create in me a kind heart. Amen.

**Do:** Write a note thanking someone for a past kindness.

**Read:** 1 Thessalonians 5:12-28



WEDNESDAY, JULY 29, 2020

# As You Are Able

---

I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

*Philippians 4:13*

We are frequently a church of “ups and downs,” that is, we often change positions in the pews between sitting and standing. Our pastor graciously recognizes that is really difficult for some of us. And so he frequently includes a phrase before his invitation: “*As you are able*, please rise for the reading of the Gospel.” As we age, there certainly may be activities that physically we are no longer able to do.

But the Father has *enabled* us to always be in his service. Even though we may not be able to actually rise from our seats, we can always “stand up, stand up for Jesus” in our prayer life and in our witness to those he sets before us each and every day. It may be different, it may be new, but we shall always be his *able*-bodied servants in some capacity.

*Don Luepke  
Fremont, IN*

**Lord**, grant me excitement over the new ways you want me to minister. Amen.

**Think:** Even if you can or cannot stand, ponder ways you can serve while sitting down.

**Read:** Hebrews 13:21; 1 Corinthians 12:4-7

THURSDAY, JULY 30, 2020

# Having Happitude

---

Blessed are the pure in heart ...

*Matthew 5:8*

As I look at Matthew chapter 5, I keep seeing the phrase “Blessed are ...” or as the Good News version translates “Happy are you ...” When I think of being happy or blessed, I think of an attitude that we can have as our Lord’s blessed children. Because of that, I concocted a new word by putting two words together. When speaking about those who are blessed, we see happy and attitude. Put them together and you get *happitude*.

As we grow older, there is much that we are unable to do. But there is one thing that we can do and that is to demonstrate to others a happy attitude. You and I as Christians can show facially, factually and faithfully a happy attitude—not merely at the recognized happy seasons of the year like Christmas and Easter, but we can make happitude a daily attitude of gratitude.

*Michael Lutz  
Shelby Township, MI*

**Lord,** give me the ability to show to others that I am blessed because you are in my life. Amen.

**List:** Make a list of the ways that you have been blessed.

**Read:** Matthew 5:2-12; Philippians 4:4-7



FRIDAY, JULY 31, 2020

# Fruit of the Spirit

---

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

*Galatians 5:22-23*

The invitation to follow Jesus is always present in our hearts, burning brightly and waiting for our response. God never gives up on us, for we are made to be in relationship with God. “Our hearts are restless until they find rest in thee” (Augustine, *Confessions*, Book 1).

As we learn to follow Jesus, we become new people, and we live “no longer for ourselves but for him” (2 Corinthians 5:15). That’s when we are given the fruit of the Spirit, and things that used to bother us we shrug off more easily. We laugh at our own foibles and exhibit patience with others. We seek reconciliation; we notice the needs of others and God’s goodness shines within us.

*Sally Macke  
St. Louis, MO*

**Dear Lord**, give us the grace to follow you always and thus receive the fruit of the Spirit. Amen.

**Enjoy:** Enjoy the blessings of the fruit of the Spirit.

**Read:** Ephesians 4:32; Zechariah 7:9

SATURDAY, AUGUST 1, 2020

# Upward Call

---

I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

*Philippians 3:14*

People everywhere are watching the athletes in Tokyo compete for Olympic honors.

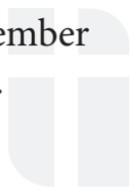
Pressing on toward the goal applies to more than sports. The apostle Paul writes with athletic imagery more than once regarding the Christian life. In the verse above, he defines the believer's goal as "the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus." That upward call surpasses even a dozen gold medals. Olympic victories are glorious for a time, maybe even a very long time, but they can't beat the glorious call of God in Christ Jesus. God calls us upward—to believe in Jesus as Savior, to receive forgiveness of sins and the gift of eternal life. Rejoice every day that the prize is already won.

*Marj Maynard  
Pipe Creek, TX*

**Heavenly Father,** guide my moves today as I press on toward the goal of your upward call. Amen.

**Cheer:** Enjoy the Olympic Games, and remember that a glorious prize is already yours by faith.

**Read:** 1 Timothy 4:6-10; 1 Corinthians 9:25



SUNDAY, AUGUST 2, 2020

# Lights On!

---

I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.

*John 8:12*

When our eldest grandson was just learning to talk, we once took him before Christmas to see some light displays around town. Whenever we turned a corner and a new display appeared, he would exclaim enthusiastically, “Light’s on!”

In summer we enjoy long daylight hours, time to be outdoors relaxing, gardening or being with friends and family. But we know fall will come and the daylight hours will shorten. Not so with Jesus. It’s always “Lights on!” with him. Following him, whether babes or elders, we are bathed in the light of his love, his forgiveness, his life, not only now, but in eternity.

*Mike May  
Kansas City, KS*

**Lord Jesus,** always bathe me in the light of your resurrection life. Amen.

**Be light:** Call or visit someone today and shine your love on them.

**Read:** John 1:1-9

MONDAY, AUGUST 3, 2020

# Something New

---

If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation.

*2 Corinthians 5:17*

Can't face another day of the "same old, same old" routine? Try something new. You don't have to commit for a lifetime—only a day, a week or a season. And you're never too old; Grandma Moses didn't lift a paint brush until she was 78. Can't sing? Try the bell choir. Love kids? Volunteer at an elementary school or day care center. Take a class in art or psychology at your local community college.

When it comes to creating something new, God provides the perfect example. Through Jesus' death and resurrection, he has created a new YOU. "The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself" (2 Corinthians 5:17-18).

*Eileen Ritter  
Byron Center, MI*

**We praise you, Lord,** for creating for us a new life in Christ. Amen.

**Try it:** With God's help, try something new this week that you have never done before.

**Read:** Lamentations 3:22-24



TUESDAY, AUGUST 4, 2020

# My Heavenly Home

---

I go to prepare a place for you.

*John 14:2*

My wife and I have remodeled three houses in which we have lived. All of these houses made use of a plethora of tradesmen: architects, carpenters, electricians, plumbers, painters, landscapers, masons, drywallers, framers, cabinet-makers, finishers, etc.

But all of these workmen pale in comparison to the carpenter's son from Nazareth who has revealed to us that he alone has gone ahead to prepare a place for us in heaven, built on the foundation of the prophets and apostles, with a cornerstone rejected by men, divinely designed for eternity and built by his nail-scarred hands. Someday he will tell us that our heavenly home is ready and repeat words once spoken from the cross: It is finished. Jesus left his heavenly home so that we might live with him in our heavenly home.

*Jerrold Lloyd Nichols  
Fort Wayne, IN*

**My Suffering Savior**, it is not humanly possible for me to comprehend what you endured for me in my place. You have done all this for me. Amen.

**Imagine:** Envision what your heavenly house will be like.

**Read:** John 14:1-4; Revelation 7:9-17

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 5, 2020

# The Pause that Refreshes

---

For I have derived much joy and comfort from your love, my brother, because the hearts of the saints have been refreshed through you.

*Philemon 1:7*

Years ago, an ad campaign suggested we pause and be refreshed by drinking Coca-Cola. Paul's letter to Philemon speaks of a different refreshment—kindness. Philemon quenched the need for encouragement. Paul says his love in action brought joy and comfort.

Many don't know our neighbors by name. We may enter church, find a seat and speak to one or two others. Perhaps we sit with our best friends at meetings. How many need a word of kindness to know they are not invisible?

Summer is a good time to open our hearts and homes. Simply eating ice cream and sitting on a patio with a tall glass of lemonade (or Coca-Cola) refreshes people who may be struggling, new to an area or need to know someone cares. Can you call someone today?

*Marilyn Nutter  
Greer, SC*

**Father**, open my eyes to people I can refresh. Amen.

**Learn:** Study Scriptures that speak of encouraging others.

**Read:** Proverbs 12:25; 1 Thessalonians 5:11



THURSDAY, AUGUST 6, 2020

# The Feat of the Feet

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... the feet of one who brings good news ...

*Nahum 1:15*

Look at your feet. Are they beautiful? Or do they show the wear of the places you have been? However they look, they enable us to be mobile, to move where we want.

Nahum (and Isaiah and Paul) talk about feet in a different way: feet bring good news. Feet are important because of what they bring.

When one person helps another, when one soul listens to another, when you perform some sort of caring act, those feet—meaning you—are delivering good news. Those feet are delivering just what someone else needs.

Jesus washed his disciples' feet as an act of service. But maybe, too, Jesus was preparing those feet to proclaim—in deeds—the good news. “How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!” (Romans 10:15). How beautiful your feet must be!

*Neal A. Orabka  
N. Las Vegas, NV*

**Thank you, Lord,** for feet which bring good news!  
Amen.

**Think:** To whom can I bring good news?

**Read:** Isaiah 52:7

FRIDAY, AUGUST 7, 2020

# Won't You Be My Neighbor?

---

You shall love your neighbor as yourself.

*Matthew 22:39*

For a half century Fred Rogers proclaimed Good News to toddlers, kids and adults. As parents, we loved his “neighborhood.” Two recent movies attest to his courageous message delivered with a childlike faith.

Whether your neighborhood is assisted living, apartments, condos, houses or a tent city, you have opportunities to love, “Mr. Rogers style.” His question can open up a friendship with anyone you meet: “Won’t you be my neighbor?”

Jesus showed us how to extend a helping hand to family, sick, hurting, addicted, dying or just ordinary folks. This Presbyterian pastor’s welcoming question can start a conversation with a new neighbor that may lead to an act of kindness!

*Rodney Otto  
Grand Rapids, MI*

**Lord**, make me an instrument of your love in my neighborhood by sharing your Good News. Amen.

**Be neighborly:** Be neighborly today toward anyone you meet.

**Read:** Galatians 5:22-24; Matthew 22:37-39



SATURDAY, AUGUST 8, 2020

# Garden Wisdom

---

For God, who said, "Let light shine out of the darkness," has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the all-surpassing power belongs to God and not to us.

*2 Corinthians 4:6-7*

My garden has clay pots filled with good soil, flowers, herbs and vegetables. They require sunshine and water almost every day. We, as clay jars, can be filled with songs of praise, Bible words and the fellowship of others. Like happy well-cared-for gardens, our jar of clay can shine forth the light of Jesus to the withered world around us. The all-surpassing power of God fills us by the power of the Holy Spirit. May we give off the fragrance of Christ. We are empty without him.

*Nancy Rapp  
Crestwood, MO*

**Dear Lord,** may I proclaim the hope I have in you to neighbors in need of your grace and salvation. Amen.

**Plant:** Plant a flower in a clay pot and gift someone with the flower as you share Jesus with them.

**Read:** Ephesians 2:1-10; 2 Corinthians 2:14-17

SUNDAY, AUGUST 9, 2020

# Beach Condo

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My people will abide in a peaceful habitation, in secure dwellings, and in quiet resting places.

*Isaiah 32:18*

Out of the blue, a person inherits a luxurious beach condo from the proverbial rich uncle. Most people would be thrilled with such good news. But what if the person never checked out the condo and never spent any time living or vacationing there. What a waste.

In parable style, let's say the wealthy uncle is our heavenly Father, the good news of the inheritance is the gospel of grace and the beach condo is our dwelling with God now and forever. What a waste to ignore the Giver, the Good News and the gift. How much better to embrace the Good News and receive the gift with joy, as a partaker of God's grace (see Philippians 1:7). This is our unexpected, undeserved inheritance. Ephesians 3:6 explains, "This mystery is that the Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel."

*Marj Maynard  
Pipe Creek, TX*

**Gracious God,** your gift fills me with joy today. Amen.

**Partake:** Be a partaker of God's grace by embracing the Good News and receiving his gift with rejoicing.

**Read:** Psalm 23:6; Psalm 37:29

MONDAY, AUGUST 10, 2020

# A Quiet Place

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My peace I give to you.

*John 14:27*

Our map of “the best spots to read a book in the upper east side of Manhattan” inspired me to draw a map of the best spots in our house to study the Bible. Let’s begin on our upstairs deck. Since our house sits next to a ravine, the deck is level with treetops—a glorious spot to ponder trees clapping for joy (Isaiah 55:12). Next, the afternoon sunlight that floods our kitchen on a cold winter day as I open my Bible is like being wrapped in Jesus’ love. In December, the best place is at the dining room table, next to our Christmas tree.

But what if a noisy subway ride is the only place you have time for a Bible study? The person next to you is texting; the wiggly kids across from you are giggling. Perhaps that’s an even better place for Bible study, in the midst of God’s world. He gives us his peace in those places too. My map really can become much bigger.

*Sally Beck  
Williamsburg, VA*

**Lord**, give me peace in which to study your Word, no matter where I am. Amen.

**Find:** Find your favorite place to read God’s Word.

**Read:** Psalm 18:30; Psalm 54:2

TUESDAY, AUGUST 11, 2020

# Encouragement

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Not neglecting to meet together ..., but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.

*Hebrews 10:25*

It is 7:00 a.m. Friday. A group of us sit in the pews for prayer. Hearing challenges prevent us from catching every word. We pray about many subjects—sometimes personal health. We sing a hymn “in parts.” We love each other.

We encourage each other. Family concerns, aging, congregational activities, mutual listening, humor, vacations, life events, etc., we share in common. The Holy Spirit has gathered us. That is calming. Jesus is accompanying us. We will see each other again on Sunday, in worship, at the Lord’s Supper, at Bible class. Some of us will leave evidence on our chins that a Bible class doughnut approached. Easter resurrection is much on our minds. We “see the Day drawing near.”

*Harry Edenfield  
Brownstown, MI*

**Jesus,** thank you for your Body, the Church. Please gather us in groups, ever so large, ever so small. Amen.

**Goal:** Join together with faithful companions—Jesus is present even where there are only two or three.

**Read:** 1 John 1; Acts 2:42-47

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 12, 2020

# Fully Satisfied

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Satisfy us in the morning with your unfailing love, that we may sing for joy and be glad all our days.

*Psalm 90:14*

For many of us, what it takes to be fully satisfied is “a little bit more.” Enough is never enough to fully satisfy us for very long. Life’s thrills soon wear out and grow stale.

The Psalm verse reminds us that only the unfailing love of God can fully satisfy us, for that alone fills our deepest need. When you find yourself becoming dissatisfied with whatever life brings, remember the unfailing love of God given to you in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. Ask your Lord to refocus your attention on his never-ending love for you, and be glad all your days, for his promises never go out of date.

*Paul Scheidt  
Chesterfield, MO*

**Loving Father**, touch my heart with grace and mercy and free my tongue to sing your praise. Amen.

**Shout:** Shout for joy to the Lord today.

**Read:** Psalm 100

THURSDAY, AUGUST 13, 2020

# Washed Clean!

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Rise and be baptized and wash away your sins, calling on his name.

*Acts 22:16*

Now that I'm retired, I have more time on my hands to help my wife around the house. I do the dirty dishes. I've learned to use the dishwasher and even educated myself to wash dirty clothes in the washing machine. In each case, when all is said and done, the dirt and filth are gone because of the clean water and soap.

Is it much different with us as Christians? Because of our Baptism in Jesus Christ, his blood has cleansed us from all sin. And just as the dishes and clothes pile up each day, so do our sins. For we sin daily, and when we sin, Jesus washes our sins away and ultimately, we receive eternal life in heaven.

*Ken Schilf  
New Haven, IN*

**Dear Lord,** thank you for daily washing away our sins, so we might be with you in heaven. Amen.

**Learn:** As we daily use water for ourselves, let it be a reminder of our Baptism.

**Read:** Romans 6:1-18



FRIDAY, AUGUST 14, 2020

# The “I Am” Statements of Jesus

---

God said to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM.”

*Exodus 3:14*

We pause on our pilgrim journey to ponder Jesus’ “I AM” statements. They tell us who he is and why he came and what he provides for our daily sustenance.

“I am the bread of life” (John 6:35).

“I am the light of the world” (John 8:12).

“I am the gate for the sheep” (John 10:7).

“I am the good shepherd” (John 10:11).

“I am the resurrection and the life” (John 11:25).

“I am the way, and the truth, and the life” (John 14:6).

“I am the true vine” (John 15:1).

Just think—seven statements for our guidance as we age gracefully and gratefully and graciously.

*Walter M. Schoedel  
Webster Groves, MO*

**Lord Jesus,** help us see you as one who offers guidance and direction, protection and hope from morning through night. Amen.

**Write:** Take time to write out statements that reflect our Lord’s ministry.

**Read:** John’s Gospel

SATURDAY, AUGUST 15, 2020

# Family Reunion

---

But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ ...

*Philippians 3:20*

My cousin, Anne, and I grew up together. We both eventually married and lived in different countries; she lived in Canada and I in the U.S. Over the years, we stayed close by visiting, phone calls and lots of e-mails. Last year, we both turned 80. Unfortunately, she was also diagnosed with leukemia. In January 2020, a couple days before she went to heaven, I called her to remind her that we look forward to a family reunion there. I also told her I loved her and heard a soft response, “I love you too.”

Isn't it wonderful that our life stories have happy endings in heaven? We'll be there together with all our loved ones who have gone before us. Believing this gives us peace when losing or leaving loved ones here on earth.

*Annette Schumacher  
Muskego, WI*

**Thank you, Lord,** for the promise of happy, heavenly endings to our lives on earth. Amen.

**Share:** Tell others the good news of family reunions in heaven.

**Read:** Philippians 3:20-21; Matthew 6:20-21



SUNDAY, AUGUST 16, 2020

# The Mustard Seed

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He put another parable before them, saying, "The kingdom of heaven is like a grain of mustard seed that a man took and sowed in his field."

*Matthew 13:31-32*

Many people throughout history have been sowing seeds for survival. Some had no modern equipment, so they relied on animals, plows and manpower to get the job done. Yet they forged ahead, working long, hard hours to prepare for the long winter ahead. Their hearts were hopeful that a bountiful harvest would come.

It doesn't matter where we are in our life's journey, and we may not have the equipment we used to have, but we still can sow mustard seeds. Just think of how that tiny mustard seed started the journey. It was planted and grew greater than the herbs and became a tree in which the birds could come and build their nests.

*Ellen J. Scott  
Fort Wayne, IN*

**Precious Lord**, help us not to become weary in doing good to others as we continue to sow seeds of your love. Amen.

**Share:** Let God send you out to scatter his seeds of love to others with the same love that he gave to you.

**Read:** Galatians 6:9-10; Jeremiah 29:11

MONDAY, AUGUST 17, 2020

# Foiled Plans

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And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.

*Romans 8:28*

All of us have at some time in our lives been disappointed or even heartbroken. We didn't get the job we had set our hopes on, a love relationship didn't work out the way we wanted, or the weather spoiled a family trip to the zoo. However, in retrospect, we realized it was for the best. We were offered another job with better benefits, we met someone else better suited to our personality, and the afternoon spent at the indoor science museum was fascinating.

If we continue to trust God in and through these experiences and setbacks, we usually agree that God's plan is better than ours.

*Harriet Stennfeld  
Fort Wayne, IN*

**Dear Lord,** help us to know that all things do work for good for those who love you. Amen.

**Share:** Tell someone about a time when God's plan was better than yours.

**Read:** Proverbs 19:21



TUESDAY, AUGUST 18, 2020

# A Secure Future

---

You guide me with your counsel, and afterward you will take me into glory.

*Psalm 73:24*

Did you catch the ads on TV urging listeners to “secure the future for loved ones by buying final expense insurance”? While that might be a helpful reminder of sensible preparation, it misses Scripture’s promises and admonition to view the future as safely in the hands of God. None of us knows what tomorrow will bring, but we do know who will be at our side. “Now faith is the assurance of things hoped, the conviction of things not seen” (Hebrews 11:1). “For here we do not have an enduring city, but we are looking for the city that is to come” (Hebrews 13:14). “Your eyes will see the King in his beauty and view a land that stretches afar” (Isaiah 33:17). Our Lord is trustworthy. Our future is secure.

*Donna J. Streufert  
South Bend, IN*

**Lord Jesus,** you have secured our future. Your gift of faith assures us we have nothing to fear as we face the future. Amen.

**Share:** Share with a friend or family member your plans for the future. Thank God for the gift of faith.

**Read:** Hebrews 12:1-2

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 19, 2020

# Memory Work

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I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you.

*Psalm 119:11*

Part of my Lutheran elementary education included memory work. I carried the assigned Bible verses, psalms, hymns and the creeds home and recited them over and over until they stuck. The Holy Spirit strengthened my resolve and wove a tapestry of Scripture and faith-building words into my heart. Each memory assignment helped me know and trust further in my Creator, Redeemer and Helper.

My parents and teachers were instrumental as the Holy Spirit imprinted knowledge of God's promises, goodness and truth into my thoughts and outlook. I sure didn't clamor for memory work in elementary school, but now I am thankful for those assignments that still steer me away from the sinful world and closer to God.

*MaryAnn Sundby  
Castle Rock, CO*

**Dear Jesus,** let my memory work from days long past help me always to be close to you. Amen.

**Recite:** Recite Psalm 23. Hear the abundance of God's Word stored up in your heart.

**Read:** Psalm 119:105; Psalm 143:5



THURSDAY, AUGUST 20, 2020

# Walk With Me, Jesus

---

I will walk with you and be your God, and you will be my people.

*Leviticus 26:12*

There are many roads in life. Sometimes we take a wrong road, so we try another. There is only one true road. It is God's road of forgiveness. The good news is that I walk the Jesus road. In Scripture we read, "The Lord your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you" (Deuteronomy 31:6). St. Paul writes, "by grace you have been saved through faith ... it is the gift of God" (Ephesians 2:8).

There are many roads in life. On the Jesus road, our Savior walks with us and forgives us. So how can we respond? St. Paul says, "Be kind ... tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you" (Ephesians 4:32). Tuck that message in your pocket as you "hit the road." And as the Spanish say, "*Vaya con Dios.*" Go with God.

*Leo Symmank  
Seabrook, TX*

**Walk with me, Jesus. Amen.**

**Learn:** As you discuss God's grace with someone else, you may both become enriched.

**Read:** Luke 15:11-31

FRIDAY, AUGUST 21, 2020

# Clothe Yourself with Humility

---

Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.”

*1 Peter 5:5*

Years ago, I read a short story titled “Clothes Make the Man.” A member of a robbery team was the lookout for his crime colleagues. Dressed as a police officer, he walked back and forth so he could alert his team if there was a problem. He played his part well. Everyone thought he was a police officer. He began doing things police do. He became how he was dressed.

Peter tells us to clothe ourselves with humility. Paul says in Philippians that Jesus humbled himself. Jesus is our role model. When we clothe ourselves with humility, we start to live a humble life. Clothes make the person.

*Glen VanderKloot  
Springfield, IL*

**Lord,** help me to follow your example by living a humble life. Amen.

**Remind:** Remind yourself daily to live a humble life.

**Read:** Philippians 2:1-11



SATURDAY, AUGUST 22, 2020

# Hymn or Him?

---

He put a new song in my mouth, a song of praise to our God. Many will see and fear, and put their trust in the LORD.

*Psalm 40:3*

Like me, you've probably been singing hymns for as long as you can remember. Have you considered, though, that we can sing a hymn our entire life but never really know him—the very God of whom we sing? It can happen if we don't take in what the words convey.

Our hymns are a rich repository of theology taken from God's Word. While some texts might seem old-fashioned or out-of-date, these time-honored hymns convey the saving grace of God's love to us in Christ in a manner that brings God's Word to life.

When you find yourself searching for comfort, leaf through a hymnal. Read each word and be drawn closer to him.

*Jane Wilke  
Woodbury, MN*

**Dear God,** just as the psalmist David used hymns to praise you, lead us to do the same. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

**Consider:** Think of a favorite hymn. What makes it special to you?

**Read:** Psalm 149:1-9; Colossians 3:16

SUNDAY, AUGUST 23, 2020

# Key to Growth

---

The unfolding of your words gives light.

*Psalm 119:130*

On a recent trip to Alaska, passing through the Matanuska Valley near Anchorage, I was amazed to see some of the largest vegetables I had ever seen. There were cabbage plants nearly a yard wide, with heads up to 18 inches! There were other cool-weather vegetables as well. How could they grow so large, especially when the growing season is so short? Then I was reminded that at this latitude, they receive nearly 24 hours of sunlight. The daily amount of sunlight is the key.

That is also an important key to our spiritual growth. We need to spend as much time daily in the “Son-light” as we can. The Spirit of Christ is thus given plenty of opportunity to help us grow in faith and service. God willing, we may grow to become “spiritual giants” as well ... to the glory of God, of course.

*Ted Zimmerman  
Napa, CA*

**Shine on us, Lord,** through your Word. Then shine through us for the world. Amen.

**Enlighten:** What is your goal for exposing yourself to the light of God’s Word? Can you bump it up a bit?

**Read:** Psalm 119:129-140; 2 Corinthians 4:1-6

MONDAY, AUGUST 24, 2020

# On the Jericho Road

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For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many.

*Mark 10:45*

Jesus was always saying “follow me.” This involved much more than just accepting him or believing in him or worshiping him. This also meant being like him and serving others like the Good Samaritan did.

We are all on our own busy Jericho Roads. This is our lifelong journey where we can daily meet the needs of others—friends, work colleagues, neighbors, family and even strangers. They may be in need of love and comfort and a prayer, or even just a smile or kind word or helping hand.

Are you and I truly walking the same road Jesus did and serving others?

*Barbara Arnold  
Irvine, CA*

**Lord**, in the busyness of our lives, may we always be on the lookout and joyfully serve others. Amen.

**Look out:** Watch for those who need help on your Jericho Road.

**Read:** Psalm 37:23

TUESDAY, AUGUST 25, 2020

# Rejoice!

---

My heart shall rejoice in your salvation.

*Psalm 13:5*

This verse is a commandment to us where even Paul repeats the command to rejoice. God intends for us to know the same joy that Jesus had in his ministry. Living by faith will allow you to focus your thoughts on the Lord. Living by faith will allow your joy for the Lord to be complete. Living by faith will allow you to rejoice in the goodness of the Lord.

The Lord is to be our only true and reliable source of joy. Don't look to other things like money or fancy cars or large homes as sources of joy. Rejoice in the opportunities for serving God at your church. Rejoice that you are a citizen in God's kingdom. Rejoice while singing your favorite hymn. Rejoice about your good health and for lovable grandchildren. Look for times to rejoice in your life as a senior.

*David Bever  
Las Vegas, NV*

**Father,** allow me to rejoice for all of my blessings.

Amen.

**Name:** Name five unique blessings from God that cause you to rejoice.

**Read:** Psalm 5:11



WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 26, 2020

# A Time of Blessed Time

---

For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven.

*Ecclesiastes 3:1*

Retirement. It's on our minds as seniors. We're either living it or it's in the near future. Putting aside the concerns of health or income, it can be a blessed time.

We can watch the rain and snow from the inside and be grateful we don't have to drive in it. We can watch the beauty of the drops or flakes as they fall. We have the time to marvel at God's artwork in the beautiful sunrises and sunsets. If we can't physically be with our families, technology today allows us to see, talk and text with them.

But most important, we now have the time to open our Bible and get to know the God we have professed or the Savior we have not yet professed. A time of blessed time—to rejoice and be glad!

*Lilly Bigelow  
Brockway, PA*

**Jesus**, thank you for the blessing of time in this time of our life. Amen.

**Look:** Look out your windows at different times of the day to marvel at God's beauty in life and nature.

**Read:** Psalm 90:12; Ecclesiastes 3:11

THURSDAY, AUGUST 27, 2020

# God Is Working

---

In all things God works for the good of those who love him ...

*Romans 8:28*

In our darkest moments, when we cry for help, let us remember to whom this cry goes: God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth. With a God that great, nothing is impossible. And what is our God doing? Working! Behind the scenes, when we think he has forgotten our desperate situation, our God is working. Not just helping, but working for good! He tells us not to give up. There is some good in all this, though at the moment we cannot see it.

Remember his promise, repeated often in his Word: “I will never leave you nor forsake you” (Joshua 1:5).

*Constance Bretscher  
Valparaiso, IN*

**Keep at work** in my life, O Lord, and help me to see all the good that is coming to me through you. Amen.

**Do:** Look for the good that will come in spite of your sin. Then go on your way with freedom.

**Read:** Psalm 121



FRIDAY, AUGUST 28, 2020

# Flame or Glow

---

They still bear fruit in old age; they are ever full of sap and green.

*Psalm 92:14*

There are many young people in church today. The descriptive term I've heard used for them is "on fire for the Lord." I praise God for the Church's continued growth.

But I wish I had their energy. My love for Jesus seems to be quieter, possibly described as a glow.

Scripture reminds me that that's okay. God uses his people at every age to share his story. We are compared to the cedars of Lebanon that have lived up to 1000 years and have grown up to 100 feet. God says the righteous still bear fruit in old age. Let's keep on growing in the Lord!

*Lynne Waite Chapman  
Fort Wayne, IN*

**Father God,** may I continue to declare your glory with whatever fuel you provide. Amen.

**Show:** Declare his glory. Encourage the young people in your life and share the wisdom of God.

**Read:** Psalm 71:15; 2 Corinthians 4:16

SATURDAY, AUGUST 29, 2020

# Holy Water

---

... a spring of water welling up to eternal life.

*John 4:14*

Water is vitally essential to life! We can't live without it.

The gospel account of Jesus and the woman at Jacob's well teaches us about holy, living water that gives us eternal life. What makes water holy? It is water connected to God's Word.

Remember that in your Holy Baptism, water poured over your head in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit washed away your sin, and you were born anew by the love and grace of God. It was paid for by the death and resurrection of God's Son, Jesus Christ. On the cross, Jesus cried, "I thirst!" It was on your behalf. Now he has given you the free gift of living (holy) water springing up to everlasting life.

*Chuck Conner  
Festus, MO*

**Lord Jesus,** thank you for the holy water of Baptism, giving me a new birth and everlasting life. Amen.

**Remember:** Next time you drink a glass of water or take a bath, think about your Baptism.

**Read:** John 4:5-15; John 3:1-7



SUNDAY, AUGUST 30, 2020

# Grumbling

---

Do all things without grumbling or disputing ...

*Philippians 2:14*

As a child, I remember thinking the Israelites of the Old Testament were the most malcontent people ever. It seemed they never learned. They would grumble and complain, God would provide, and, almost immediately, they were grumbling again. They were never happy.

As I became a little older, I realized the Israelites' wandering was a picture of us and our journey through life. We often spend much more time grumbling about things than we spend in praise.

As children, we wish for the freedom adults have. As adults, we long for the carefree days of our youth. Like the Israelites, we are never content. Imagine all we could accomplish for God's kingdom if we spent our "grumbling" time in praise and prayer.

*Gloria Doty  
Fort Wayne, IN*

**Help us, Lord,** to be content and rejoice in all things.  
Amen.

**Help:** Help a friend see their blessings.

**Read:** Philippians 2:13-15; 1 Peter 4:8-10

MONDAY, AUGUST 31, 2020

# Second Childhood

---

Through the praise of children and infants you have established a stronghold against your enemies, to silence the foe and the avenger.

*Psalm 8:2*

The kids in the children's choir I direct know this Psalm verse well. I teach it to them to reinforce how important their work of leading worship in song really is. When children praise God, Satan is silenced!

The children I teach inspire my faith with their incredible insight into song lyrics, their unquestioning belief and unhindered enthusiasm. Their praise is contagious! When I hear them sing, my own childlike faith is restored. All worldly concerns fade, and my focus is on Jesus alone. That's the kind of faith Jesus wants all of us to have. Even in our later years, we can live a second childhood, offering unhindered, unconditional praise in all we do, say and sing!

*Sandi Geis  
St. Louis, MO*

**Jesus,** give me a childlike faith that trusts you in all circumstances and sing your praise for all to hear. Amen.

**Sing:** Sing a children's song of faith. Allow the profound simplicity of the words to inspire your praise.

**Read:** Matthew 11:25-30; Matthew 18:1-5

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 1, 2020

# New Clothes

---

The LORD has anointed me ... to grant to those who mourn ... the garment of praise instead of a faint spirit.

*Isaiah 61:1, 3*

The prophet Isaiah describes the faint spirit in which we are so often dressed—it is the garment of those who are brokenhearted, bound and captive by sin. A robe of shame and sin and guilt is made of heavy cloth. So dressed, we mourn, marked with the ashes of repentance.

But we have seen the promise fulfilled! Jesus, the Lord's anointed, has dressed us in new garments. Clothed in our guilt and sin, he carried our sins to the cross. He took onto himself the penalty of death that we deserved and, in exchange, clothed us in his righteousness, his own holiness. Then when he returns, we will be "further clothed" as "what is mortal may be swallowed up by life" (2 Corinthians 5:4). The garment of praise we now wear will be woven anew into a garment of immortality and victory.

*Carol Geisler  
Orange, CA*

**Dressed now** in your righteousness, Lord, we await the day when we will be clothed in immortality. Amen.

**Share:** Donate new or gently used clothing to those in need.

**Read:** Isaiah 61:1-4; 1 Corinthians 15:50-58

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 2, 2020

# God Is MY Redeemer

---

For I know that my Redeemer lives, and at the last he will stand upon the earth.

*Job 19:25*

“My Gigi,” 5-year-old Lauren said, “will you push me on the swing?” Later she introduced me to a friend she’d met on the playground, “This is my Gigi.”

Lauren has used the possessive pronoun *my* as part of my name since she learned to speak. It accurately reflects what she knows is true—that I belong to her. I’m not just any grandmother; I am hers. Because we share this special relationship, she can ask me for help, comfort, instruction and companionship.

Job had this type of relationship with God. During incomprehensible suffering, he drove his faith stake into the ground and declared, “I know that my Redeemer lives.” God wasn’t some far-off deity; he was personal. He wasn’t a wish, a hope or a thought; he was real. Job knew God’s name—my redeemer—and called on him.

*Lori Hatcher  
Lexington, SC*

**Father**, when I feel frightened or alone, remind me that you are my God. Amen.

**Learn:** Practice calling on your redeemer. He delights to answer your prayer.

**Read:** Job 19:25-27; Psalm 18:2



THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 3, 2020

# Grading on the Curve

---

For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God ...

*Romans 3:23*

Getting 100% on a test was the perfect score. Were my scores ever perfect? Never, but I loved the teacher who “graded on the curve” —lowering the standard. When judged against others, it meant I was smarter, more learned and better than most, but not as bad as others. Wow—a little self-righteousness.

God does not grade our lives on the curve. He has given us his standard. Miss the mark and we fail regardless of what other people do. None of us hits the mark. Our “aha” moment comes when we realize that when God raises his red pen to write “Fail,” he sees his Son. He loves us enough to show mercy and give us grace and lead us to our final graduation.

*Barbara Arnold  
Irvine, CA*

**Gracious Father,** thank you for sending your Son. He hit the mark for us. Amen.

**Thank:** Thank God for giving you a perfect score through Jesus.

**Read:** Ecclesiastes 7:20; Galatians 3:22

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 4, 2020

# Rejoice in Hope

---

Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer.

*Romans 12:12*

What are you hoping for? I am hoping for a new outside grill and a larger television. I am hoping that our September trip to Denver will go smoothly. Those things are wishful thinking on my part. Wishing for something is not the same as having hope and confidence in God's Word. Hope is something that you desire to happen in your life. The hope that Paul is describing in this verse is more than wishful thinking. As Christians, hope comes from focusing your mind on the promises of God for the future.

How do we rejoice in hope? We set our minds on heavenly things. We spend time in God's presence through daily devotions, prayer and worship at church. We rejoice that we are saved by God's grace.

*David Bever  
Las Vegas, NV*

**Lord,** help to rejoice in the hope that comes from Jesus. Amen.

**Rejoice:** Look for ways to rejoice today while practicing God's presence.

**Read:** Romans 12:9-13



SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 5, 2020

# Reflections of God's Handiwork

---

The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork.

*Psalm 19:1*

The view from the shore is mesmerizing! The trees, the ducks and even the clouds appear in the water as if there were two of everything. A perfect reflection of God's handiwork. Every place in the world has been created by God. And each place has its own beauty.

Often we take for granted the beauty that surrounds us. We forget to give God thanks for the radiant sunset or the crashing waves of the ocean. Yet we never doubt that the sun will rise each morning because God has created an amazing ecosystem that reflects his omnipotence. And for that we give thanks!

*Margaret Rickers Hinchey  
Ft. Myers, FL*

**Thank you, God,** for sharing the beauty of creation with us each and every day. We praise you for your mighty power. May we always be reflections of your glory. Amen.

**Think:** Think about the most beautiful part of creation you have ever seen and give God thanks!

**Read:** Psalm 96:11-12; Job 12:7-10

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 6, 2020

# Moving Again

---

We have this as a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, a hope that enters into the inner place behind the curtain, where Jesus has gone as a forerunner ...

*Hebrews 6:19-20*

Over the years, I have moved six times. Three were sad because we were moving away from neighbors who became friends, and three were exciting because we were moving to a new home, even one in which we were the first ones living in that home. Moving is tiring when you are older and leaving special memories, like the raising of children with all the good times.

Our home is where our heart is, and when we are anchored in God, he provides acceptance in all situations—physically, mentally, challenging or rewarding; God knows what we need, giving us comfort in knowing he will call us to our heavenly home to be with him forever.

*Don Hollmann  
Ballwin, MO*

**Father God**, give me comfort in knowing that your plan is perfect, your love for us has no limits, and you have the perfect home for us in heaven. Amen.

**Comfort yourself:** Daily and often talk with God. He wants to hear from you.

**Read:** Galatians 2:20



MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 7, 2020

# Take Root

---

"Come, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters!"

*Isaiah 55:1*

I've had the same cactus for 40 years! It's been poked, moved, trimmed and cut down to a stub over the years. Despite sunburns and occasional neglect, it continues to produce new branches that reach for the ceiling. My old African milk tree thrives by reaching its long roots toward water. Also called a Cathedral Cactus, this succulent reminds me to spread my roots and soak up the Holy Spirit's power. It inspires me to store God's love so that even when I feel damaged, I know I will soon flourish!

*Lisa Heule  
Littleton, CO*

**Holy Spirit**, empower me to extend my roots so that I can absorb God's thirst-quenching strength! Amen.

**Draw:** Draw yourself with many long roots and God's jubilant love raining down on them!

**Read:** Jeremiah 17:7-8; Job 29:19-20

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 8, 2020

# Surprise!

---

For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.

*Jeremiah 29:11*

Most of us love surprises and are very grateful to those who plan them. But what if the surprise doesn't arrive on a joyous note, or if the surprise is a heart-breaking surprise?

In those moments, Jeremiah offers us encouragement and hope that will impact our reactions: "For I know the plans I have for you." Whatever the moment, God has a plan for you. Not an evil, hurtful plan, but a good plan, a God-directed plan. His plan is to give you hope and a future, to strengthen your faith, to refocus your eyes on the finish line and to connect your heart to eternity. It's amazing what God does in our most challenging moments.

*Randal Jeppesen  
Medford, WI*

**Father**, when heartbreaking surprises occur, speak boldly to my heart, "\_\_\_\_\_, I have a good plan for you." Amen.

**Recall:** Recall one of your recent nonjoyous surprises and ask yourself, "How will I respond?"

**Read:** Proverbs 3:1-8



WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 9, 2020

# Rejoice, Give Thanks and Sing

---

Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!

*Philippians 4:4*

“Rejoice, O pilgrim throng! Rejoice, give thanks, and sing.” The writer of this majestic hymn knows well the joy of praising God. Thankfulness leads to rejoicing, which in turn overflows into songs of praise to our mighty and loving God. Not only that, the writer points out that we are singing “with all the angel choirs, with all the saints of earth.”

I have days when it is hard to rejoice and give thanks, when I really don't feel like singing. And yet, when I surrender to the Holy Spirit's leading, he opens the eyes of my heart to see Jesus, and gratefulness and joy seep in. Before I know it, I find myself joining in that everlasting song of praise, “Rejoice, be glad and sing.”

*Katherine Klemp Krueger  
St. Paul, MN*

**Heavenly Father,** help me to look always to Jesus for comfort and joy. Amen.

**Sing:** Sing a song of praise today—out loud.

**Read:** Psalm 68:32-35

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 10, 2020

# Kick Up Your Heels

---

You shall go out leaping like calves from the stall.

*Malachi 4:2*

It was a truly amazing sight. There is a confined agricultural feeding operation not far from us that houses young dairy calves as they grow into working cows. They are truly “confined” in that they stay locked up in their stalls continuously. But then it happened. Someone must have left the barn door open, and those calves came bursting into the adjacent field and were literally dancing and kicking up their heels like never before. The calves wanted the whole world to know one thing—they were absolutely beside themselves with joy.

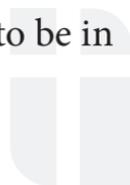
That is exactly the freedom that we have in Jesus. We rejoice and are oh so glad! We exclaim it in our liturgy: “Thank the Lord and sing his praise; tell everyone what he has done. Let everyone who seeks the Lord rejoice and proudly bear his name.” Such ecstasy!

*Don Luepke  
Fremont, IN*

**Lord, thank you;** I’m kickin’ and grinnin’ over my freedom in you. Amen.

**Smile:** Let everyone see how happy you are to be in Christ.

**Read:** Isaiah 61:10; John 16:24



FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 11, 2020

# In My Name

---

Until now you have asked nothing in my name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full.

*John 16:24*

How fortunate we are to have a God who loves us so much! God is ever ready to respond to the desires of our hearts.

We may ask ourselves, “What is standing in the way of bringing my needs before the Lord?” Some of us may not believe God is interested in or cares about us. Yet Jesus tells us in Matthew 10:30, “But even the hairs of your head are all numbered.” God’s love is universal and personal.

In our lives as Christians, we should be mindful that we can always call upon the blessed name of Jesus. “And his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace” (Isaiah 9:6). This knowledge, more than anything else in this world, brings us peace and joy.

*Sally Macke  
St. Louis, MO*

**Lord**, thank you for your invitation to ask for what I need. In your name I pray. Amen.

**Write:** Write down a time in your life God answered a prayer request to remember God’s faithfulness.

**Read:** John 20:30-31; Psalm 72:17

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 12, 2020

# LOL

---

He will yet fill your mouth with laughter, and your lips with shouting.

*Job 8:21*

Have you heard the term LOL recently? According to social historians, “Nobody uses that anymore.” Whether or not we add LOL to an e-mail isn’t important. What does matter is that we need more “laugh out loud” moments. Gerontologists say older adults are not having enough fun.

Now is an ideal time to look for fun. Laugh as two dogs delight in becoming acquainted. Laugh at toddlers next door splashing in a plastic tub. Laugh as you totally whiff a shot on the pickleball court. LOL moments are all around.

Today can overflow with lighthearted blessings. After all, this day has been personally delivered with LOL (lots of love) from the Creator himself.

*Mary Manz Simon  
Ft. Myers, FL*

**Dear God,** help me savor the fun-filled blessings of today. Amen.

**Practice:** Laugh more.

**Read:** Amos 8:1; Proverbs 17:22



SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 13, 2020

# To Be a Tomato

---

What you sow is not the body that is to be, but a bare kernel, ... But God gives it a body as he has chosen ...

*1 Corinthians 15:37-38*

Tomatoes: I love them! They come in abundance in July and August. But in early March, they are tiny seeds. They don't look anything like tomatoes. I have to trust the seed seller to provide the variety I am to harvest and eat. Only the ripened fruit will reveal what's been going on since the late winter darkness. I'm thankful that God's Word teaches me that I am just a seed and not what is to be. As I age, I wonder about the image I'll be in the resurrection. So much newness awaits! Our sinful selves fear the new and unknown, but St. Paul tells us we're fools to worry about it. We're going to turn out great!

*Mike May  
Kansas City, KS*

**Lord Jesus,** please keep growing in me what is headed toward the great harvest of the resurrection. Amen.

**Look:** Today, marvel at a purchased or picked tomato. Think about where it's been.

**Read:** 1 Corinthians 15:35-49

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 14, 2020

# Just Delightful

---

Great are the works of the LORD, studied by all who delight in them.

*Psalm 111:2*

Each year millions of travelers head out to view, admire, photograph and enjoy the wonders of creation.

The works of the Lord are worthy of being admired and enjoyed and, as Psalm 111:2 adds, being “studied by all who delight in them.” This kind of study doesn’t mean doing research and reports, but rather thinking deeply about how the Lord’s work affects us—body, mind and soul. Consider also that the works of the Lord go beyond the wonders of creation to include his whole plan of salvation. As soon as God’s perfect world was ruined by sin, he delivered the Gospel promise to Adam and Eve. Creation and salvation—these are wondrous works of the Lord to be studied because we delight in them.

*Marj Maynard  
Pipe Creek, TX*

**Mighty Lord of All**, your works of creation and salvation are just delightful. Thank you for such great love. Amen.

**Study:** Connect the dots of the Lord’s work from creation to salvation, Genesis to Revelation.

**Read:** Psalm 35:27-28; Psalm 111



TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 15, 2020

# It's Gorgeous!

---

Let everything that has breath praise the LORD! Praise the LORD!

*Psalm 150:6*

I'll admit it. I was complaining to my mom on the phone about the weather, which is something we often do in those conversations. Wouldn't you agree?

Before I finished my lament, Mom interjected, "It's gorgeous here!" Suddenly, it hit me. We spend more time complaining than praising our God for things like the weather.

But the psalmist, as he closes the Book of Psalms, gets it right, "Let everything that has breath praise the Lord." Likewise, he would further say, "Notice the greatness of God even within the weather!"

Once we notice we have something to be grateful for instead of to complain about, his further encouragement is to "praise the Lord."

*Randal Jeppesen  
Medford, WI*

**Creator** of all things, teach me to think "gorgeous" whatever the weather. Amen.

**Thank:** Before each noon meal, glance at the weather and thank God for how gorgeous it is.

**Read:** Psalm 148

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 16, 2020

# Hand in Hand

---

I will take you by the hand and keep you.

*Isaiah 42:6*

What a delight it is to hold the hand of a small child! Holding hands is a way of indicating protection, support and, of course, love. Our Lord God does just that for us. He protects us in dangerous moments. He gives us strength to do the right thing. Where and when have you felt that grip, that grasp of love? In a hospital? When making a major decision? In a moment of great joy?

Our Lord takes us by the hand so that we can do great things—maybe not opening eyes or freeing captives or releasing those in darkness (Isaiah 42:6, 7), but by giving hope and help and loving others—that we can do! A delight of being in love is to hold the hand of the other. Our Lord holds our hands! Whose hands will we hold?

*Neal A. Orabka  
N. Las Vegas, NV*

**Thank you** for always holding my hand, Lord. Amen.

**Think:** Whose hand should I hold?

**Read:** Isaiah 42:1-9



THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 17, 2020

# Still Surprising!

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The LORD is good to those who wait for him, to the soul who seeks him.

*Lamentations 3:25*

For a while, I watched and rewatched a favorite old sitcom series on Netflix. It eventually got boring. So, when reading and rereading the gospels ... yawn. Been there, done that, right? Wrong! If we bring the wonder and the expectation, the Holy Spirit always provides wisdom and understanding new every morning. Bring him the burdens of your heart today. Write them down right now. What kept you up last night? What are you dreading? Bring him the joys of your heart. What are you excited about today? What do you look forward to? Bring it to the One who knows already and provides the gift of his story of love. It's not just any story; God's Word is the story of God's faithfulness. Now that's the story for a lifetime.

*Nancy Rapp  
Crestwood, MO*

**Holy Spirit**, set my heart ablaze each morning, open your words and speak to me. I am listening. Amen.

**Journal:** Write the answers God provides to the questions in this devotion.

**Read:** Lamentations 3:22-26; Matthew 7:7-8

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 18, 2020

# Just Like Dad

---

God created man in his own image ...

*Genesis 1:27*

“You sound just like your mother.” “That’s the way my dad always did it.” How often we find ourselves speaking or acting just like our parents!

Our heavenly Father created human beings in his own image, and Adam and Eve lived joyfully in God’s image in the garden. But their willful disobedience erased God’s likeness, and their sinfulness was passed down through endless generations to you and to me. But God had a plan to redeem the world. He promised a Savior who would suffer and die for all people. Through Jesus, God’s image is restored. We can reach out to each other in his love, we can care for those who are in need, and we can forgive one another as God has forgiven us. Just like our Father!

*Eileen Ritter  
Byron Center, MI*

**Forgive our sins, Lord,** and help us to be more like your Son Jesus. Amen.

**Check your image:** Who do you most resemble?  
What needs to change?

**Read:** Romans 8:26-30



SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 19, 2020

# Picture Joy

---

May the God of hope fill you with all joy ...

*Romans 15:13*

I have a picture of a golden retriever photo-bombing the selfie that his owners are taking. All three are smiling. A photo of a Peruvian bride and groom, beaming and covered with confetti, is another. A friend sent me a photo of her five-year-old self, walking down the sidewalk holding hands with her dad, both whistling. A group of kids in a south St. Louis neighborhood, racing out of their house, laughing and chasing each other is pure joy, and so is one of a little Rwandan girl, smiling as she leans on the windowsill of her hut. I can share their happiness daily as I work in front of the bulletin board where they are, and they give me snippets of the joy and peace that is to come. The “desert drear” on earth, as the hymn says, may sometimes surround us, but the pictures remind me that our Lord, through his death and resurrection, has prepared a joyful eternal home in heaven.

*Sally Beck  
Williamsburg, VA*

**O Lord**, thank you for little previews of what you have in store for us. Amen.

**Find:** Find images of joy all around you.

**Read:** Psalm 33:1; Psalm 35:27

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 20, 2020

# Take It Easy

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Whoever listens to me will live in safety and be at ease ...

*Proverbs 1:33*

I retired earlier this year. People would ask, “What will you do when you retire?” After several times, I started saying, “As little as possible!” I realized that it’s okay to take it easy. Even the Lord took it easy one day a week!

Now, I do find myself taking it easy sometimes. I take it easy with my wife. I take it easy with the yardwork and gardening I love. I take it easy with my kids and grandkids. I take it easy with the Word of the Lord. I talk to my friend Jesus. I sit comfortably and listen to the Lord speak in his Scripture. That begets peace, God’s own peace.

Join me. Take it easy today.

*Don Schatz  
Lynnwood, WA*

**Thank you, Lord,** for putting me at ease. Amen.

**Be at ease:** Listen to the Lord.

**Read:** Psalm 112:1-9



MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 21, 2020

# God and Me Heritage Report

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Behold, children are a heritage from the LORD ...

*Psalm 127:3*

When my wife recently gave me an ancestry DNA test kit, I told her, “I know all my ancestors are German.” To my surprise, the report showed that my ancestry also includes a lot of Swedish people.

The Bible provides us an even more accurate DNA report than those on the market today. This Biblical report shows that we were created by God in his image (Genesis 1:27). It tells us that God calls us his children (1 John 3:1). And it shows us that God loves us so much “that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:16). What a joyous report!

At family reunions, pass on the stories of your ancestors and share your heritage from the Lord.

*Stan Tordson  
Stewartville, MN*

**Lord**, help me to always share your relationship to my family. Amen.

**Label:** Label names on old pictures; write down memories.

**Read:** Genesis 1:26-28; John 3:1-21

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 22, 2020

# Active Reading

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Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.

*Psalm 119:105*

Transitions are often stressful, but I look forward to gaps between daily Bible reading plans. When we're in the process of choosing a new book or program, we fill in with random Bible stories. And I love it.

Periodically, I need to be reminded of Rahab's courage. I delight in hearing how Gideon came from behind a winepress to become a mighty warrior. I marvel at how an unnamed woman saved her town from destruction. (See 2 Samuel 20:16-22.) These stories, even when brief, make an impression because they follow a sequence of events that leads to visual images. As a result, we relate naturally to the feelings and thoughts of the characters. This process is called "active reading." Mental exercise that stimulates cognitive movement is especially important for us as older adults.

Searching for a good story that grows your brain (and feeds your soul)? Look in the Bible.

*Mary Manz Simon  
Ft. Myers, FL*

**Lord**, bless my walk through your Word. Amen.

**Enjoy:** Re-read your favorite Bible story.

**Read:** John 5:39; Romans 15:4



WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 23, 2020

# Prayer Life

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We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you ...

*Colossians 1:3*

Our pastor preached a heartwarming sermon, “Lord, Teach Us to Pray,” emphasizing how important it is to spend time each day in prayer with our Lord. We need to stay close in a daily relationship with him as our Savior, Wonderful Counselor and Prince of Peace. Earlier in the service, a toddler was baptized, and Pastor took him in his arms to pray. The young boy cried out, “I want my daddy!” Pastor placed him back in his father’s arms. Later, in his sermon, Pastor thanked the boy for helping him preach his sermon. As Christians, we want to stay close to our Father, feeling his loving arms around us as we pray.

*Annette Schumacher  
Muskego, WI*

**Loving Father**, we thank you for holding us close in prayer. Amen.

**Share:** Tell others about the loving arms of our Father in heaven.

**Read:** Philippians 4:6-7; Psalm 5:2

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 2020

# Serve Cheerfully and Quietly

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So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith.

*Galatians 6:10*

Some years ago, I worked for a Christian organization that employed mostly young people. We had a kitchen equipped with a refrigerator and a microwave for the workers' convenience. However, it was not taken care of properly. There were crumbs on the counter, spills in the microwave and open containers left in the refrigerator. However, it hadn't always been like that. One day, we came to realize that an older woman who no longer worked there had been keeping it clean. She had quietly cleaned up after everyone and never mentioned it.

It is God-pleasing for us to do things for others without expecting gratitude or even acknowledgment.

*Harriet Stennfeld  
Fort Wayne, IN*

**Dear Father,** help us cheerfully serve others. Amen.

**Ponder:** How can you quietly serve someone today?

**Read:** Matthew 6:3; 1 Peter 4:10



FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 25, 2020

# V-I-C-T-O-R-Y

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But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

*1 Corinthians 15:57*

In our town, September means the beginning of Friday night high school football. Remember those days? Maybe you were a player on your hometown team. Maybe you were a cheerleader or marching band member. Whatever your role, victory over the opposing team was your goal. Winning was everything! Shouting “V-I-C-T-O-R-Y,” fans did all they could to ensure a win.

As we mature, we realize life is not a game. Sin and death are realities. On our own, we cannot save ourselves. Winning God’s approval is impossible. “But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Cor. 15:57).

*Donna J. Streufert  
South Bend, IN*

**Praise to you,** Lord Jesus, for your victory over sin, death and the grave through your death and resurrection. I can live, confident of your love and forgiveness. Amen.

**Consider:** How can you spread the victory we have in Christ?

**Read:** 2 Corinthians 2:14

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 2020

# The True and Only Light

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The night is far gone; the day is at hand. So then let us cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light.

*Romans 13:12*

I am happiest when daylight bursts forth at dawn and darkness fades away. I am thrilled to see the sun's rays reaching across the sky and feel its warmth. Day does not come on its own! God's omnipotent design rotates the earth for each day to unfold. The sunlight always lifts my attitude and outlook. I hope to reflect the sunlight to all I meet.

Like daybreak, the love and grace of Jesus fill me with joy each morning. That love is so transformative, I pray that selfishness and worldliness fall far from me. I hope to live more like Jesus and reflect his joy and truth to everyone.

*MaryAnn Sundby  
Castle Rock, CO*

**Thank you, Lord,** for the light of the sun. Help me to enjoy the brightness it brings and the joy it gives to my heart. Amen.

**Wake:** Wake up early one morning to watch the sun rise.

**Read:** Psalm 72:17; Psalm 113:3



SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 27, 2020

# Rainbows Indoors

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This is the sign of the covenant that I am making between me and you and every living creature ...

*Genesis 9:12*

When the sun came out that rainy afternoon, I saw two rainbows on my kitchen floor. They were each about a foot long, but they displayed the full spectrum of colors. This has never happened again. The Lord's miracles in nature are astounding even in our humble kitchens and through a pane of glass in an ordinary window. My concerns before that moment didn't matter anymore. God had reminded me that this world is full of him and his plan for us.

As Noah and his family were saved from the flood, so we are rescued by Jesus. While we wait for him to come again, we have the beauty of this world made for us by our God.

*Judy Scherr  
Lemay, MO*

**Our God** and our Creator, help us see your majesty and know joy. Amen.

**Look:** Wherever you are, look around and find the wonders our Lord has given us to enjoy.

**Read:** Genesis 9:12-17; Psalm 19:1-6

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 28, 2020

# “Bee” Not Afraid

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Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go.

*Joshua 1:9*

I recently read that bees captured in the bottom of a jar will never escape, even without a lid on top. Why? Because the bees cannot look up; they can only keep bumping into the glass and each other.

That sounds a bit like us, don't you think? We are often held captive in our own jars of fear. While fear can be good if it keeps us from harm, it can also be debilitating if it keeps us from trusting and stepping out in faith.

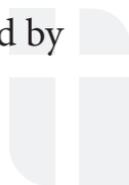
New situations can often lead to growth, even if they seem somewhat frightening. That's when it's time to look to the one who will always be with us, no matter what.

*Jane Wilke  
Woodbury, MN*

**Loving Lord**, you know every situation I face. Help me to trust in you every step of the way. Amen.

**Reflect:** What might be keeping you trapped by your own fears? Give it to the Lord.

**Read:** Psalm 27:1; Isaiah 41:13



TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 29, 2020

# Goat Yoga

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Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer ... let your requests be made known to God.

*Philippians 4:6*

Our goat kidding season just finished. Feeding, petting and watching our goat kids is relaxing and makes me smile, but at my age, I'm not ready for the latest trend—to have them hop on my back during a “goat yoga” session.

While many of our bodies may no longer be able to relieve stress by strenuous exercising or doing goat yoga, the apostle Paul suggests that praying will help. In his letter to the Philippians, he wrote, “Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer ... let your requests be made known to God.” He goes on to say praying brings us “the peace of God, which surpasses our understanding” and guards both our hearts and minds in Jesus (verse 7).

Although “goat yoga” may bring a temporary calm to stress, prayer brings an eternal peace.

*Stan Tordsen  
Stewartville, MN*

**Lord**, help me to exercise some but pray more. Amen.

**Try:** Try some simple yoga today.

**Read:** Philippians 4:4-9; 1 Peter 5:6-7

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 30, 2020

# A Boat for a Pulpit

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Getting into one of the boats, ... he asked him to put out a little from the land. And he sat down and taught the people from the boat.

*Luke 5:3*

As a retired pastor and former Navy chaplain living at the Lake of the Ozarks in Missouri, I fulfilled my dream of preaching from a boat. A church member donated his pontoon boat for a “floating chapel.” Another member erected a tall cross at the bow of the boat. A third friend from church installed a sound system. On Sunday mornings, we boated to “Worship Cove” and conducted a service for all the boaters who gathered.

Remember that there are unlimited ways to proclaim the Good News of God’s love in Christ other than a church pulpit. The gospel must be spread in every means possible. In your retirement years, how are you sharing God’s love? Could you read the Bible to children? Visit or phone shut-ins? Share a daily devotion?

*Chuck Conner  
Festus, MO*

**Father,** I don’t have a pulpit, but help me to think of ways to tell others what you have done for me. Amen.

**Look:** Keep your eyes open for a new “fishing spot” to share the gospel!

**Read:** Luke 5:1-11

# HOLY HABITS for HOPE-FULL HEALTH

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How can we live out a lifestyle of Christ's love and joy each day of the week? Here are a few suggestions.

**SUNDAY—SMILE** at people—especially those who aren't smiling at you. Remember, if you see some people without smiles, give them one of yours!

**MONDAY—MAKE** it a habit to call some older friends whom you haven't talked to lately, just to say HI and "God bless you!" What a difference it will make!

**TUESDAY—THINK** positively as long and as much as you can today. Put the best construction on everything you hear.

**WEDNESDAY—WELCOME** everyone you see with a "God bless you!" Share a word of faith, a happy hug ... and tell them it's all about the Lord loving us!

**THURSDAY—THANK** everyone who is kind and generous to you this day. Call or visit someone just to say "Thanks"!

**FRIDAY—FORGIVE** someone who needs to hear your forgiving words, for his or her sake and for your sake as well. Forgive because the Lord has forgiven us!

**SATURDAY—SURPRISE** someone! Give a friend a gift, just because. Offer someone a ride or bake some cookies for some little ones.

This is the week the Lord has made. Share it joyfully with others in the Lord!

## For Special Celebrations

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Dear Jesus, summertime is a great time for families and friends to gather and celebrate special events. As we come together for weddings, graduations and anniversaries, we thank you for the family and friends you have put into our lives. Through them, we have learned to love and worship you. Now you provide these special days for us to love each other. We are grateful. Amen.

## For the Gift of Aging

---

Lord, thanks for the gift of aging. We often take life for granted. Remind us again today what our role is in life—to show and tell the story of you to the younger and the older whom you have gathered around us. Make our words and actions speak love and forgiveness to those you place in our lives today. Lord, what an assignment! Wow, what a Lord! Amen.

## Rejoicing in Accomplishments

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Dear Creator of the world, give us the courage, energy and commitment to live in peace and harmony on this globe that you have given us as a gift. Remind us daily that this is your world, Lord, and not ours to do with it as we please. Forgive us when we waste so much of what you have gifted us. Change our hearts and remind us that you have created this world for all people, young and old, black and white, rich or poor. Remind us that “this is my Father’s world!” Amen.

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