

# **God on the Move**

**Atonement Lutheran Church  
Boulder, Colorado**

**Our Saviour's Lutheran Church  
Ft. Collins, Colorado**

**Zion Lutheran Church  
Loveland, Colorado**

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Printed in the United States of America.

Easter Revelation theme adapted from writings by Craig R Koester on  
[workingpreacher.org](http://workingpreacher.org).

Devotional book title and the September, October, Advent, Christmas and Lent  
themes are adapted from *A Preacher's Guide to Lectionary Sermon Series:  
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*Book and cover designs by Pastor Chad Kohlmeyer*

# Introduction & Acknowledgement

We are pleased to offer this devotional book for the academic year 2018-19.

Each weekly theme is introduced on a Saturday evening or Sunday morning. This theme is reinforced in the devotional book with a theme picture and a memory verse. These are for your growth, reflection and memorization throughout the week.

Each day offers a devotion/liturgy for you to do with others. Dare to use this with your household, or seek out a partner or partners to walk alongside you. Daily practice grows faith and a deeper relationship with God. In addition, you'll also feel more connected to those you gather with.

We extend a special thanks to Rich Melheim and Faith Inkubators for permission to use the FAITH5 as the pattern for the daily routine.

## The FAITH5:

 **SHARE** your highs and lows. We begin by reflecting on our day or since the last time we gather. What's been good or a blessing? What has been hard?

 **READ** the bible verse selected for the day.

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. For each day there is a *Conversation prompt*. Do not feel like you have to use this prompt if you have other things to share. However, it's there to help get conversations started if needed.

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. There is a *prayer prompt* to begin or end the prayer time if desired. Praying for others, and being prayed for is very powerful. Please consider offering prayers for one another along with the prompt.

 **BLESS** one another by making the sign of the cross on one another's forehead or hand. There is a *blessing prompt* provided for each day if needed.

We acknowledge that this routine will feel different if you do not live with others. However, many individuals have shared they enjoyed similar resources on their own. We hope you might also seek another individual or group to use this resources with.

Thank you to the daily devotional writers: Pastor Stacy Payne (James), Pastor Leta Behrens & Pastor Michael Stadtmueller (October), Aly Kohlmeyer (Beatitudes), Pastor Leta Behrens & Pastor Michael Stadtmueller (Advent/Christmas), Pastor Sonja Pancoast (I Corinthians/Epiphany), Pastor Joel Pancoast (Lent), Pastor Chad Kohlmeyer (Revelation/Easter). This devotional book wouldn't have happened without their dedication.

September 2018

A FAITH THAT WORKS- JAMES' "PEARLS IN THE STRAW"

# Just Do It!

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“Every generous act of giving, with every perfect gift, is from above, coming down from the Father.”

- *James 1:17*

## Just Do It!

*When we hear God's perfect law and grace we are moved to action.*

James reminds us that it is not enough to hear God's word and think about it. We are called to daily live out our faith through our actions. We are called to show love, compassion, and grace to those around us. We are called to help those in need. We answer this call not out of guilt or obligation, but rather JOY! We respond to God because God has first loved us.

Bible reading for the week: James 1:17-27

SEPTEMBER

9



**SHARE** your highs and lows.



**READ** <sup>17</sup> *Every generous act of giving, with every perfect gift, is from above, coming down from the Father. -James 1:17*



**TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* What are your gifts? Name one act of giving you did this week.



**PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* Gracious God, thank you for all the amazing gifts you give us. Help us to be generous and giving in your name. Amen.



**BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* You are a gift. Be a gift to others.

SEPTEMBER

10

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** *You must understand this, my beloved; let everyone be quick to listen, slow to speak, slow to anger. -James 1:19*

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* Do you sometimes have a hard time listening to others when you want to speak? How can we be better listeners? What does it feel like to really be listened to?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* Listening God, we thank you that you always have time to hear us. Help us to listen to others so they might also feel heard. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* God hears you.

SEPTEMBER

11

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** *You must understand this, my beloved let everyone be quick to listen, slow to speak, slow to anger. -James 1:19*

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* Have you ever said something when you were angry that you wish you hadn't?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* God, help us to think before we speak so we do not hurt others. Help us to use our words to build others up. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* God loves you no matter what!

SEPTEMBER

12

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** *and welcome with meekness the implanted word that has the power to save your souls. -James 1:21b*

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* What word has God planted in you?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* God, we give you thanks that you plant your word right in us. Help us to grow in your word and love our neighbor. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* God's word grows in you.

SEPTEMBER

13

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** *But be doers of the word, and not merely hearers who deceive themselves. -James 1:22*

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* How did you live out God's word today?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* God, you call us to live your word every day. Help us to not just hear, but to also do good in your name. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* May you do good in the name of God.

SEPTEMBER

14

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** *But those who look into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and persevere, being not hearers who forget but doers who act—*

*they will be blessed in their doing. - James 1:25*

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* How does God's law call you to act? Did you do that today?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* Forgiving God, your law is perfect but we, your people, are not. Give us courage to live your law and grace in the world each day. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* God's law is written on your heart.

SEPTEMBER

15

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** *Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this: to care for orphans and widows in their distress, and to*

*keep oneself unstained by the world. -James 1:27*

 **TALK:** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* Who are the people in our communities that are in special need of our help? How can you personally help meet those needs?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* Caring God, help us to see the needs of the people all around us. Show us how we can help make others' lives better in your name. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* You are God's hands in the world.

A FAITH THAT WORKS- JAMES' "PEARLS IN THE STRAW"

# Body and Soul

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“So faith by itself, if it  
has no works, is dead.”

*- James 2:17*

# Body and Soul

*Our faith makes us bold to do good work in the world, so God is glorified.*

The gift of faith and the way we act that faith out through our work cannot be separated. In the very beginning, in our baptismal call, God calls forth our light. We are handed a candle and someone says, "Let your light so shine before others that they may see your good works and glorify your father in heaven." We are gifted by God and then asked to share that gift with the world, with our whole body and soul.

Bible reading for the week: James 2:1-17

SEPTEMBER

16



**SHARE** your highs and lows.



**READ** *For if a person with gold rings and in fine clothes comes into your assembly, and if you take notice of the one wearing the fine clothes and say, "Have a seat here, please." – James 2a, 3a*



**TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* Do you ever treat people differently because of the way they dress or speak? Are we nicer to people who look and act like us?



**PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* Gracious God, you call us to see everyone through your eyes. Everyone is a beloved child of God. Amen.



**BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* You are a beloved Child of God.

SEPTEMBER

17

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** *and if a poor person in dirty clothes also comes in, while to the one who is poor you say, "Stand there," or, "Sit at my feet."* – James 2:2b, 3b

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* Do you sometimes avoid people because they are poor, don't have nice clothes, or are different in some way? How do you think God would treat them?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* Loving God, help to see everyone with your eyes. Give us compassion for all of your beloved children. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* God has compassion for you.

SEPTEMBER

18

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** *Has not God chosen the poor in the world to be rich in faith and to be heirs of the kingdom that he has promised to those who love him?* -James 2:5

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* What can we learn from those around us that are in need?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* Learning God, help us to have open hearts and minds to learn from those in need around us. Let us value all people for having gifts from you. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* Everyone is equal and valued in God's sight.

SEPTEMBER

19

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** *You do well if you really fulfill the royal law according to the scripture, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."*

-James 2:8

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* Who is your neighbor? Who isn't your neighbor?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* Powerful God, help us to love our neighbor with our whole hearts and our actions. Help us to love ourselves. Help us to do it all in your name. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* God loves you and your neighbor.

SEPTEMBER

20

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** *What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if you say you have faith but do not have works? Can faith save you?*

-James 2:14

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* What is the difference between faith and works? How do they go together? Can they be separated?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* God of faith and works, you call us to live out our faith by doing your work. Help them both to be alive and visible in our lives. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* Your faith is enough. Your work is enough.

SEPTEMBER

21

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** *If a brother or sister is naked and lacks daily food, and one of you says to them, "Go in peace; keep warm and eat your fill,"*

*and yet you do not supply their bodily needs, what is the good of that? - James 2:15-16*

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* Are their times when your words and actions don't match?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* Forgiving God, we are sorry for the times we say things in your name and then do nothing to help. Strengthen us to try again. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* You are forgiven.

SEPTEMBER

22

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** *So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead. -James 2:17*

 **TALK:** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* Do you agree with James' statement? Do you have both?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* Faithful God, help our faith to be alive in you. Let others see our good works and glorify your name! Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* God is glorified in all you do.

A FAITH THAT WORKS- JAMES' "PEARLS IN THE STRAW"

# The Good Life



“Who is wise and  
understanding among you?

Show by your good life that  
your works are done with  
gentleness born of  
wisdom.”

- James 3:13

# The Good Life

*We are called to draw near to God that we might be filled with peace, gentleness, and mercy.*

James points out that once we start down a road of envy, jealousy, and stealing these things only become more a part of our nature. Instead, we are called to continually draw near to our loving God. Spending time in God's grace and compassion will lead us to an abundant and good life.

Bible reading for the week: James 3:13-4:3, 7-8a

SEPTEMBER

23



**SHARE** your highs and lows.



**READ** *Who is wise and understanding among you? Show by your good life that your works are done with gentleness born of wisdom.*

– James 3:13



**TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* Do you feel like you are wise and understanding? What helps you be these things more often?



**PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* Loving God, you are wise and understanding and give us your grace. Help us to be graceful with those around us. Amen.



**BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* You are a beloved Child of God.

SEPTEMBER

24

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** *But if you have bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not be boastful and false to the truth.*

– James 3:14, 3b

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* What are things that make you envious? What do you wish you had that you don't? What is the one thing you won't share with anyone else?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* Selfless God, open our hearts and hands. Rid us of envy and give us generosity. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* God accepts you even on your worst days.

SEPTEMBER

25

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** *For where there is envy and selfish ambition, there will also be disorder and wickedness of every kind. -James 3:16*

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* Have you noticed once you start something (lying, being mean, and taking things) it's hard to stop? How do we add nice things instead?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* Listening God, show us the ways we are hurting the world, others, and ourselves. Help us to take steps toward healing. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* You are healed by God.

SEPTEMBER

26

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** *But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without a trace*

*of partiality or hypocrisy. And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace for those who make peace. -James 3:17-18*

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* Where have you experienced peace, gentleness, and mercy this week?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* Gentle God, you call us to be your peacemakers. Show us peace, gentleness, and mercy today. Help us to show it to others. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* May you be filled with God's peace.

SEPTEMBER

27

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** *Those conflicts and disputes among you, where do they come from? Do they not come from your cravings that are at war*

*within you? You want something and do not have it; so you commit murder. And you covet something and cannot obtain it; so you engage in disputes and conflicts. You do not have, because you do not ask. -James 4:1-2*

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* Have you ever done something mean because you didn't get what you wanted? How did you feel after?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* Giving God, you give us everything we need in this life. Help us to be grateful for what we have. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* You have enough; you are enough.

SEPTEMBER

28

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** *You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, in order to spend what you get on your pleasures. Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you - James 4:3, 7*

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* Have you ever asked for something you knew you shouldn't have? Did you get it? Was that a good or bad thing?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* Strengthening God, you answer our prayers with love and compassion. Thank you for giving us all we need. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* God hears your prayers.

SEPTEMBER

29

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** *Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. -James 4:8*

 **TALK:** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* Do you feel close to God today? If not, who moved?

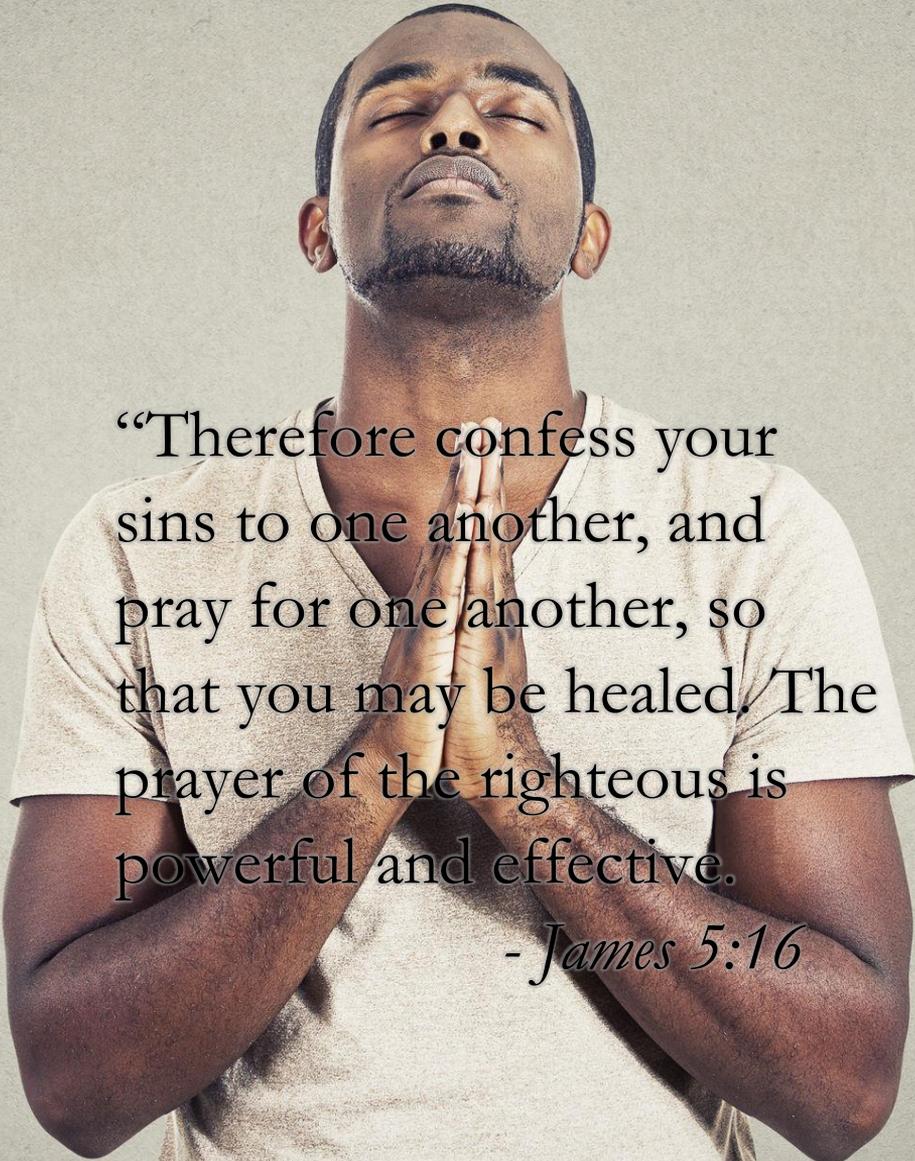
 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* Ever-near God, we thank you for your promise to always be with us. Help us to trust in your presence even if we do not feel it. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* God is near.

A FAITH THAT WORKS- JAMES' "PEARLS IN THE STRAW"

# Powerful Prayer

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“Therefore confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, so that you may be healed. The prayer of the righteous is powerful and effective.

- *James 5:16*

# Powerful Prayer

*We are called to come to God in prayer as individuals, and communities of believers, that lives may be changed.*

God answers prayers. This is the promise that James reminds us of this week. Prayer is powerful. We don't have to understand exactly how it all works for God to use prayer to move hearts and minds. We are called to come to God with all of our emotions, all of our needs, and all of our burdens. Sharing our burdens in prayer lightens our load and draws us closer to God. We try so hard to make it in this life on our own. But even *before* all else fails... pray!

Bible reading for the week: James 5:13-20

SEPTEMBER

30



**SHARE** your highs and lows.



**READ** *Are any among you suffering?*

*They should pray. Are any cheerful? They*

*should sing songs of praise. – James 5:13*



**TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* Are you suffering or cheerful today? Do you feel like you need prayers or singing? What happens when each person in your family needs something different?



**PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* Understanding God, we give you thanks that we can come to you no matter how we are feeling. You are always willing to listen and respond as we need. Amen.



**BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* God meets you where you are.

OCTOBER

1

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** *Are any among you sick? They should call for the elders of the church and have them pray over them, anointing them with oil in the name of the Lord. – James 5:14*

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* Have you, or someone you know, ever been so sick they asked for others to pray for them? How do those prayers make someone feel? Who needs your prayers today?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* Healing God, we come to you today to pray for the sick and all those in need. We pray especially for (add your prayers here). Thank you for taking care of them. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* God cares for each of us.

OCTOBER

2

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** *The prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise them up; and anyone who has committed sins will be*

*forgiven. -James 5:15*

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* What healing do you need today? What sins do you need forgiven?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* Forgiving God, we give you thanks you have promised us your forgiveness any and every time we ask. Forgive us our sin and heal us today. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* God forgives you.

OCTOBER

3

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** *Therefore confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, so that you may be healed. -James 5:16a*

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* What does confession mean? What does it look like? Try confessing one thing you are sorry or sad about today. When someone confesses have everyone in the group say, “you are forgiven.” Do you feel better after?

 **PRAY** for one another’s highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* Communal God, thank you for placing people around us to remind us how much you love and forgive us. Help us to show your love and forgiveness to them as well. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* God offers you healing today.

OCTOBER

4

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** *The prayer of the righteous is powerful and effective. -James 5:16b*

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* How often do you pray? Do you feel like it works? How does God work through our prayers?

 **PRAY** for one another’s highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* Powerful God, we are reminded that when we pray to you, you hear us and respond. Thank you for giving us prayer. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* Your prayer is powerful!

OCTOBER

5

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** *Elijah was a human being like us, and he prayed fervently that it might not rain, and for three years and six months it did not rain on the earth. Then he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain and the earth yielded its harvest.*

- James 5:17-18

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* Have you heard others pray out loud? What kind of things do people pray for? Who teaches you how to pray?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* God, thank you for all the people in the Bible and in our lives that show us how to pray. Help us to pray daily and teach others to pray as well. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* God hears your prayer.

OCTOBER

6

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** *My brothers and sisters, if anyone among you wanders from the truth and is brought back by another, you should know that whoever brings back a sinner from wandering will save the sinner's soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins.*

-James 5:19-20

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* Who in your life helps you make good choices? How do you encourage others to make good choices?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* Loving God, thank you for all the people in our lives that love us and help us to make good choices. You want us to live a full and abundant life. Show us the way. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* God gives you a full and abundant life.



THE UPSIDE-DOWN KINGDOM

# Where the Children are Blessed

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*Let the little children come to me and do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs.*

*- Mark 10:14*

# The Upside Down Kingdom

## *Where the Children are Blessed*

*Shocking reversals lead to true discipleship. This week the Gospel of Mark tells us about a kingdom where children are blessed.*

We can miss the shock of this scripture, but a first century reader would not. The culture of Jesus' day regarded children more as a commodity than as their future generations. Death, disease and other factors made them less important than slaves. They had no rights. Jesus focusing on them was his questioning the very structures that made up Roman society. Yes, Jesus loves the little children, but he also speaks directly against a culture where one person was treated less than another. Today we are called to look at the power structures created by our culture and speak out against all who are placed on the bottom simply because of their existence.

Bible readings for the week: Genesis 2:18-24, Psalm 8, Hebrews 1:1-4; 2:5-12 Mark 10:2-16

OCTOBER

7



**SHARE** your highs and lows.



**READ** *Let the little children come to me; do not stop them; for it is to such as*

*these the kingdom of God belongs. –Mark 10:14*



**TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* Describe the Kingdom of God.



**PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* Gracious God, thank you for your great mercy. Teach us to receive and share this gift. Amen.



**BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* Child of God you are marked with the cross of Christ forever.

OCTOBER  
8

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** *Oh Lord, our God, how majestic is your name in all the earth!*  
—Psalm 8:1

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* When have you been most aware of the beauty of the earth and all creation?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* Jesus, thank you for the gift of grace and that you have much goodness and kindness to offer us. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* Child of God you are sealed by the Holy Spirit forever in God's love.

OCTOBER  
9

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** *You have made them a little lower than God and crowned them with glory and honor* —Psalm 8:2

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* How are you called to be a steward of God's creation?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* God, we pray this day to celebrate this gift of life and its beauty. We are humbled. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* God's love is yours!

OCTOBER  
10

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** *(Jesus) is the reflection of God's glory and the exact imprint of God's very being, and he sustains all*

*things by his powerful word. –Hebrews 1:3*

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* How can we be a reflection of Christ Jesus?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* Lord make me a channel of your peace. Where there is hatred let me bring your love. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* You belong to a gracious God.

OCTOBER  
11

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** *But we do see Jesus, who for a little while was made lower than the angels, now crowned with glory and*

*honor because of the suffering of death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone. –Hebrews 2:9*

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* What songs inspire you by how they relate Christ's love for us?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* Help our lives to be inspired by your life: caring for those in need, loving all of your people and challenging our world to respond with love. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* God of wonder you have blessed us as a gift to others.

OCTOBER  
12

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** *I will proclaim your name to my brothers and sisters, in the midst of the congregation I will praise you.*

—Hebrews 2:12

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* Who is it most easy to talk about God with? Who is it most hard to talk about God with?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* Holy Spirit, grant us the words to share your grace and mercy with others. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* God has given you a voice that you might proclaim the love of Christ.

OCTOBER  
13

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** *Yet you have made them a little lower than God, and crowned them with glory and honor. You have given them dominion*

*over the works of your hands; you have put all things under their feet, all sheep and oxen, and also the beasts of the field, the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea, whatever passes along the paths of the seas. O LORD, our Sovereign, how majestic is your name in all the earth!*

—Psalm 8:5-9

 **TALK:** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* What does it mean for you to have dominion over the creation? What doesn't it mean?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* God, guide us as we live in harmony with your creation. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* God loves and trusts you!

# Where the Last are First

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*Then who can be saved? Jesus looked at them and said, "For mortals it is impossible, but not for God; for God all things are possible."*

*- Mark 10:26b-27*

# The Upside Down Kingdom

## *Where the Last Are First*

*If the Kingdom of God is our job to enter, good luck.*

*‘How hard it will be for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God!’* Jesus doesn’t mince words here, but for good reason. He knew that one’s relationship with money is often more of an obstacle than a blessing in terms of living a life of faithfulness. No matter how you visualize that camel and the eye of a needle it is going to get messy. How can our material blessings be a blessing instead of an obstacle to salvation? Only when we realize that Christ alone opens the gates of mercy, love and forgiveness instead of any of our earthly possessions.

Bible readings for the week: Amos 5:6-7, 10-15; Psalm 90:12-17; Hebrews 4:12-16; Mark 10:17-31

OCTOBER

14



**SHARE** your highs and lows.



**READ** *Children how hard it will be for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom*

*of God! -Mark 10:23*



**TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* What would be the hardest things to give up if you were asked to?



**PRAY** for one another’s highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* Gracious God our life is more than our material possessions. Open our lives to the possibility of your love that is more powerful than our possessions. Amen.



**BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* Child of God, You are more than your possessions.

OCTOBER  
15

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** *And the disciples were perplexed at these words. But Jesus said to them again,*

*“Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God.”*

*-Mark 10: 24-25*

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* Share a journey you have been on where you couldn't make it alone. How hard was it to not simply be in charge yourself?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* God of Grace and mercy help our gifts to be used beyond ourselves so that we might bless your creation and all of its inhabitants.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* Child of God, may you know the ways of grace and mercy and lead through them.

OCTOBER  
16

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** *But many who are first will be last and the last shall be first. Mark 10:31*

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* Share a time when you knew someone needed your help and you were able to respond.

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* God of abundance, help me to see the blessings in my life and not take them for granted. May they be a blessing beyond my own reach and touch others' lives as well. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* May God's holiness shine through your actions this day and always.

OCTOBER  
17

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** *Seek the Lord and live or he will break out against the house of Joseph like fire...ah, you that turn justice to wormwood,*

*and bring righteousness to the ground Amos 5:14-15*

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* Name three possessions that you have not been able to let go of even though you are sure you don't need them.

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* Help my life and my possessions reflect who I am as a child of God. Make me ever-conscious of my impact on others that I may be directed by you. Amen

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* The God of Mercy has mercy on you. Go and share God's good news.

OCTOBER  
18

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** *Teach us to count our days so that we*

*may gain a wise heart. –Psalm 90:12*

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* Who has helped you to appreciate life more lately? How?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* God of wisdom open your word up to us, so that we may better know how to direct our lives. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* May you be blessed with wisdom and hope.

OCTOBER



**SHARE** your highs and lows.

19



**READ** *Indeed, the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing until it divides soul from spirit, joints from marrow; it is able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. —Hebrews 4:12*



**TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* Are there prophets in your own life? Who will you listen to when you have gone astray? Who can call you out?



**PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* Raise up in our lives prophets, and give us the wisdom to know to whom we should listen. Amen.



**BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* May the word of God guide you to grace and mercy.

OCTOBER



**SHARE** your highs and lows.

20



**READ** *For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who in every respect has been tested as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore approach the throne of grace with boldness, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need. —Hebrews 4:15-16.*



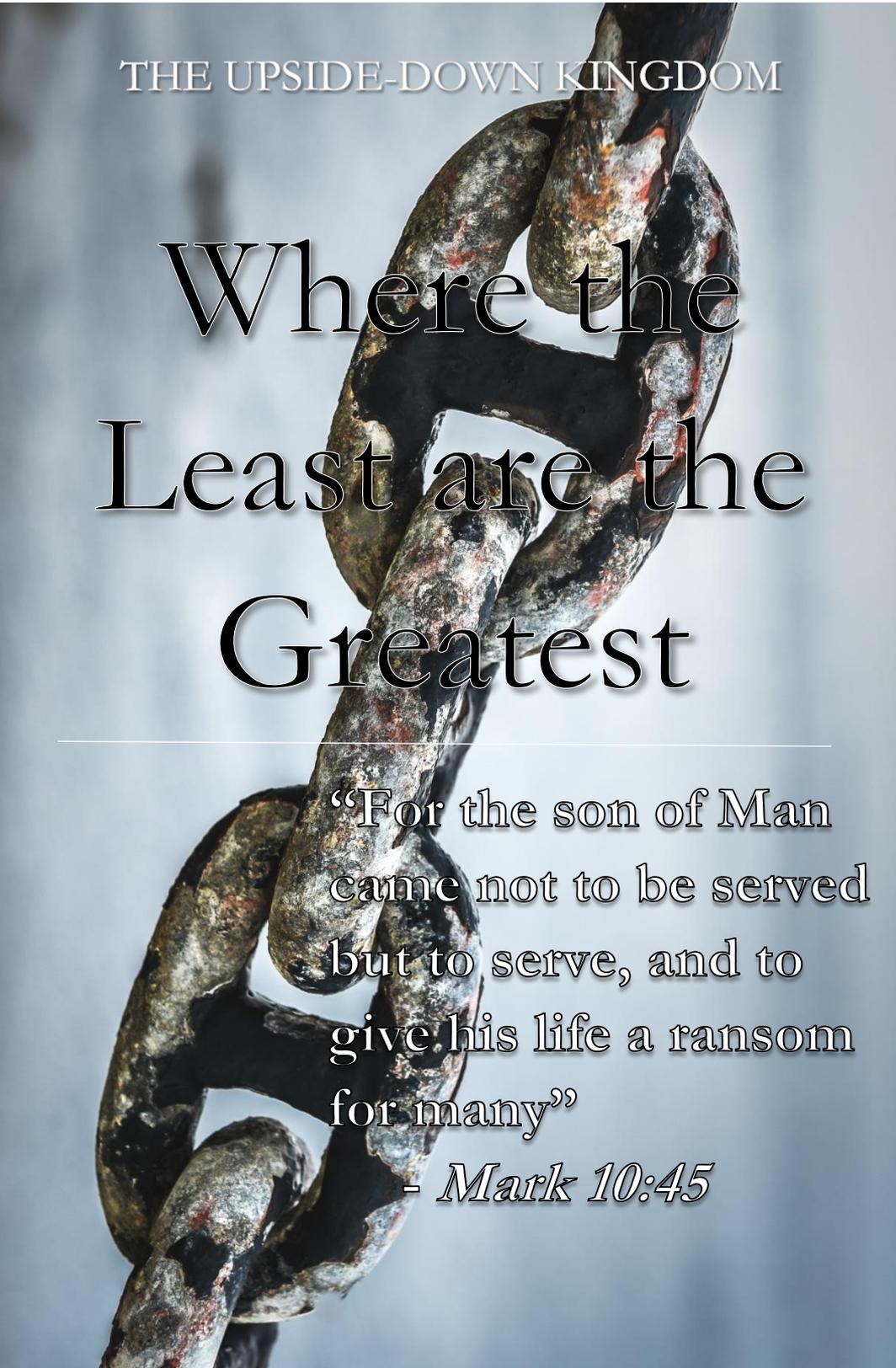
**TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* When have you been most proud of your boldness? When has boldness gotten you into trouble?



**PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* Raise up in our lives reflections of your grace that we might see through them the power of your love to overcome our weaknesses. Amen.



**BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* God of all seasons bless you in what is next in your life.



THE UPSIDE-DOWN KINGDOM

# Where the Least are the Greatest

---

“For the son of Man  
came not to be served  
but to serve, and to  
give his life a ransom  
for many”

- *Mark 10:45*

# The Upside Down Kingdom

*Where the Least are the Greatest.*

*The disciples still didn't get it. Do we?*

It has been said that power corrupts and absolute power corrupts 'absolutely'. This week we see the disciples wrestling with the power of being a disciple. Imagine the journey that Jesus is on as he looks at his chosen followers. What a mess! But Jesus loves them and explains it to them again and again. If you want to be first, you must be last. It won't be about the glory you get. It will always be about God and God working through you. The irony of course is that if the two disciples were granted what they had asked it would have been on each side of the cross. Do we get that it is a blessing that we have been set free from that place to serve those around us? How can we turn away from power and turn towards a life of service?

Bible readings for the week: Isaiah 53:4-12; Psalm 91:9-16; Hebrews 5:1-10; Mark 10:35-45

OCTOBER

21



**SHARE** your highs and lows.



**READ** *But Jesus said to them, "You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, or be baptized with*

*the baptism that I am baptized with?" They replied, "We are able."*

*-Mark 10:38,39a*



**TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* When have you bitten off more than you can chew?



**PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* God of mercy lead us back to you when we have gone astray, help us to see your presence in those precise moments where we don't deserve it that we may glorify your name. Amen.



**BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* You have been made righteous for Christ's sake.

OCTOBER

22

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** *You know that among the Gentiles those whom they recognize as their rulers lord it over them, and their great ones are tyrants*

*over them. But it is not so among you; but whoever wishes to become great among you must be your servant. —Mark 10:42-43*

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* When you think of leaders, who has been a good example to you of servant leadership?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* Help us to see ourselves as servants and stewards of your world. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* Servant of God go with grace and mercy, spreading hope and joy.

OCTOBER

23

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** *For the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as*

*ransom for many. —Mark 10:45*

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* Share a time where your service or someone close to you made you stop and think about the impact and gift of serving others.

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* God our provider. You have blessed us with so much. Help us to see that all we have is yours and to share our blessings with others. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* Gracious God of hope grant you the peace that passes all understanding that you might serve God with a humble heart.

OCTOBER  
24

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** *Surely he has borne our infirmities and carried our diseases; yet we accounted him stricken, struck down by God and afflicted., But*

*he was wounded for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the punishment that made us whole, and by his bruises we are healed. –Isaiah 53:4-5*

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* Who has sacrificed for you the most in their lives?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* God who walks with us. Thank you for holding me up in my low times and promising never to leave me. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* Go with God's blessing. You are set free to serve.

OCTOBER  
25

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** *By a perversion of justice he was taken away. Who could have imagined his future? For he was cut off from the land of the*

*living, stricken for the transgression of my people –Isaiah 53:8*

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* Share a story about a time you were blamed for something you didn't do.

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* We are not worthy of your love and yet you come to us again and again. Praise to you O Christ for the gift of love that you have shared with us. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* You have been made righteous by the cross of Christ Jesus, sent forth to love and serve the Lord.

OCTOBER

26

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** *Out of his anguish he shall see light; he shall find satisfaction through his knowledge. The righteous one, my servant, shall make many righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities.*

*-Isaiah 53:11*

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* How do you think God shares light with us?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* God of light, open our eyes to your salvation. Help us to see your presence that is right around us. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* Jesus light of the world has called you his own to reflect his light to others.

OCTOBER

27

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** *When they call to me, I will answer them; I will be with them in trouble, I will rescue them and honor them. -Psalm 91:15*

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* How do you pray? What can you use to remind yourself to pray?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* Lord have mercy on us. We don't always pray as we ought. Too often we are focused on our selfish goals and ambitions. We come to you for our own needs. Help us lift up those who need your Spirit and to reflect your love with the gifts you have given us. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* God's presence will never leave you.

THE UPSIDE-DOWN KINGDOM

A hand is shown reaching up from the surface of a body of water. The water is a clear, light blue color with gentle ripples. The hand is positioned centrally, with fingers spread. The background is a clear, light blue sky. The text 'Where the Blind Can See' is overlaid on the image in a large, black, serif font with a white outline. A thin white horizontal line is positioned below the text.

# Where the Blind Can See

“When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout out and say, ‘Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!’”

- *Mark 10:47*

# The Upside Down Kingdom

## *Where the Blind can See*

So often in the Gospels the name of the ones being healed are not given. However, Bartimaeus is named in this week's story. The reason we can't be sure, but certainly one reason...is to honor those that are forgotten that still matter to God. Mark names the nameless. Who needs us to see them today? Who needs us to name them and help them know they matter to God? What is clear is that part of our call to discipleship is to look at our own blind spots and see those around us who are there in those places.

Bible readings for the week: Jeremiah 31:7-9; Psalm 126; Hebrews 7:23-28; Mark 10:46-52

OCTOBER  
28



**SHARE** your highs and lows.



**READ** *When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout out and say, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!"* Mark 10:47



**TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* What things are we taught at a young age that convey mercy? What things are we taught that don't show mercy?



**PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* Maker of Heaven and Earth, open our eyes to your wisdom that our actions may share your gifts to all people. Amen.



**BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* Go in Christ's mercy to share the wondrous love we know.

OCTOBER

29

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** *Jesus said to him, “Go your faith has made you well.” Immediately he regained his sight and followed him on the way. –Mark 10:52*

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* What would be the response of the crowds who saw Jesus’ miracles?

 **PRAY** for one another’s highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* So often we are blind to the ways you can use us. Give us the vision to know where to go and the inspiration and courage to boldly carry out your will. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* Open your eyes and go; your faith has made you well.

OCTOBER

30

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** *For thus says the Lord; Sing aloud with gladness for Jacob, and raise shouts for the chief of the nations; proclaim, give praise and say, “Save, O Lord, your people, the remnant of Israel.”*  
-Jeremiah 31:7

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* Share an occasion where everyone was truly joyful.

 **PRAY** for one another’s highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* God help us find a song for our voice, and help the song be heard that it may share joy with others. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* May God’s joyful Spirit be contagious through you.

OCTOBER

31

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** *With weeping they shall come, and with consolations I will lead them back, I will let*

*them walk by brooks of water, in a straight path in which they shall not stumble; for I have become a father to Israel, and Ephraim is my firstborn. –Jeremiah 31:9*

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* When you picture a peaceful place what comes to your own mind? Share that place's special meaning to you.

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* Help us to see beyond ourselves to those who thirst for your presence. Help us to be a light that shines hope to them. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* May you be a light to the world through Christ Jesus.

NOVEMBER

1

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** *When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion we were like those who dream. Then*

*our mouth was filled with laughter, and our tongue with shouts of joy. –Psalm 126:1-2*

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* Describe a time where you experienced great joy? What made that time so joyful?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* Help us to see laughter and joy as a part of our daily life. Help us to build up hope in others that they may find joy. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* May the God of Joy grant you a joyful spirit to share with the world.

NOVEMBER

2

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** *May those who sow in tears reap with shouts of joy Psalm 126:5*

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* What are some things that have brought you to tears that you would still do again?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* Our world needs justice. Help our hands work for justice and peace. May those who sow in tears today, reap with shouts of joy tomorrow. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* Child of God, your hands are a gift to serve others.

NOVEMBER

3

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** *For it was fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy blameless,*

*undefiled, separated from sinners, and exalted above the heavens. –Hebrews 7:26*

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* As you think of the holiness of Christ what does this image bring into your mind? Do you like the priestly image of Christ? Why or why not?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* Help us to know how to be holy in your eyes and see beyond the human actions of holiness to understand better the Godly actions of holiness. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* May your walk find a holy path that shares joy with others.

THE BEATITUDES

# The Poor in Spirit

---

Blessed are the poor in spirit,  
for theirs is the kingdom of  
heaven.

— *Matthew 5:3*

# The Poor in Spirit

*Reminders of God's presence in times of struggle.*

Over the years, many people have struggled with the translation of the word, “Blessed” or “Happy” in the Beatitudes. How can someone who is poor in spirit be happy or be blessed in their struggles? Looking into the Beatitudes, one thing we notice is how Jesus names particular burdens people face and offers words of hope and assurance. It’s as if Jesus says, “I see you. You are not alone. Remember this hope, (the kingdom of heaven in this beatitude) belongs to you!”

Bible reading for the week: Matthew 5:3

NOVEMBER

4



**SHARE** your highs and lows.



**READ** <sup>3</sup>*Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

– *Matthew 5:3*



**TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* What does being poor in spirit feel like?



**PRAY** for one another’s highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* God who is near, may those who are poor in spirit know your presence today. Amen.



**BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* When you are poor in spirit, the kingdom of heaven is yours. God is with you.

NOVEMBER

5

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** <sup>3</sup>*Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

– Matthew 5:3

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* Have you experienced a time in your life when you felt poor in spirit?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* God who is near, thank you for staying close to us when we are poor in spirit. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* When you are poor in spirit, the kingdom of heaven is yours. God is with you.

NOVEMBER

6

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** <sup>3</sup>*Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

– Matthew 5:3

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* Who is someone in your life who might feel poor in spirit?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* God who is near, give us the eyes, ears, and heart to recognize those who are poor in spirit. Give us the ability and courage to love them and walk with them as you walk with us. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* When you are poor in spirit, the kingdom of heaven is yours. God is with you.

NOVEMBER

7

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** <sup>3</sup>*Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

– Matthew 5:3

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* How can you care for someone who is poor in spirit?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* God who is near, give me the ability to care for the poor in spirit in the ways you love and care for them. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* When you are poor in spirit, the kingdom of heaven is yours. God is with you.

NOVEMBER

8

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** <sup>3</sup>*Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

– Matthew 5:3

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* Jesus says, "Theirs is the kingdom of heaven." How would you describe the kingdom of heaven?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* God who is near, we believe that you dwell with us and within the kingdom of heaven. Thank you for standing with us in our struggles. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* When you are poor in spirit, the kingdom of heaven is yours. God is with you.

NOVEMBER

9

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** <sup>3</sup>*Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

– Matthew 5:3

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* What does it mean to you when Jesus says, “*theirs* is the kingdom of heaven?”

 **PRAY** for one another’s highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* God who is near, you give us great love, great hope and even the kingdom of heaven. Thank you for all the ways you walk with us. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* When you are poor in spirit, the kingdom of heaven is yours. God is with you.

NOVEMBER

10

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** <sup>3</sup>*Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

– Matthew 5:3

 **TALK:** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* How does God care for the poor in spirit?

 **PRAY** for one another’s highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* God who is near, thank you for daily caring for the poor in spirit. Your care is constant, and we are grateful that we can carry this hope within us. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* When you are poor in spirit, the kingdom of heaven is yours. God is with you.

THE BEATITUDES

# Those Who Mourn

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Blessed are those who mourn,  
for they will be comforted.

— *Matthew 5:4*

# Those Who Mourn

*Reminders of God's comfort as we mourn.*

There is nothing happy or blessed about being in a time of mourning. Our mourning leaves us feeling lost, despondent, disoriented, depressed, uncertain, and longing. In this beatitude, Jesus points us to a deep, life-long assurance that we are not alone in our grief. Have you ever struggled watching someone in mourning, not knowing what to do? In this beatitude, Jesus reminds us that they will be comforted. The God of all understanding, the always present God is near. Remember this hope, (comfort, in this beatitude) belongs to you!

Bible reading for the week: Matthew 5:4

NOVEMBER

11



**SHARE** your highs and lows.



**READ** <sup>4</sup>*Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.* – Matthew 5:4



**TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* What does it mean to mourn? What does it feel like?



**PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* God who is near, mourning hurts and loss deeply impacts us. Thank you for recognizing and acknowledging those in mourning with your ever-present love. Amen.



**BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* When you mourn, God will comfort you. God is with you.

NOVEMBER

12



**SHARE** your highs and lows.



**READ** <sup>4</sup>*Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted. – Matthew 5:4*



**TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* When have you mourned in your life?



**PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* God who is near, we offer to you the areas of our lives where our mourning continues. Bring us your great comfort and reminders of your love. Amen.



**BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* When you mourn, God will comfort you. God is with you.

NOVEMBER

13



**SHARE** your highs and lows.



**READ** <sup>4</sup>*Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted. – Matthew 5:4*



**TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* Do you know anyone who mourns right now?



**PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* God who is near, today we remember those in mourning, especially (names). May they know your presence and comfort as they grieve. Amen.



**BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* When you mourn, God will comfort you. God is with you.

NOVEMBER

14

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** <sup>4</sup>*Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted. – Matthew 5:4*

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* What does it feel like to be with someone who is mourning?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* God who is near, it is humbling to watch and sit with someone who is mourning. We realize our limitations. Your perfect love and promise of comfort are sufficient where our earthly abilities to comfort are not quite enough. Thank you for being the Great Comforter to those who mourn. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* When you mourn, God will comfort you. God is with you.

NOVEMBER

15

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** <sup>4</sup>*Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted. – Matthew 5:4*

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* Describe a time when you have felt comforted.

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* God who is near, thank you for the ways we have been comforted in our mourning and grief. They are the embodiment of your love for us. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* When you mourn, God will comfort you. God is with you.

NOVEMBER

16

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** <sup>4</sup>*Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.*

– Matthew 5:4

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* How can you comfort others who mourn?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* God who is near, it can be difficult to know how to care for those who mourn. Empower us by your Spirit to live out your love and comfort to those in our lives who may need it. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* When you mourn, God will comfort you. God is with you.

NOVEMBER

17

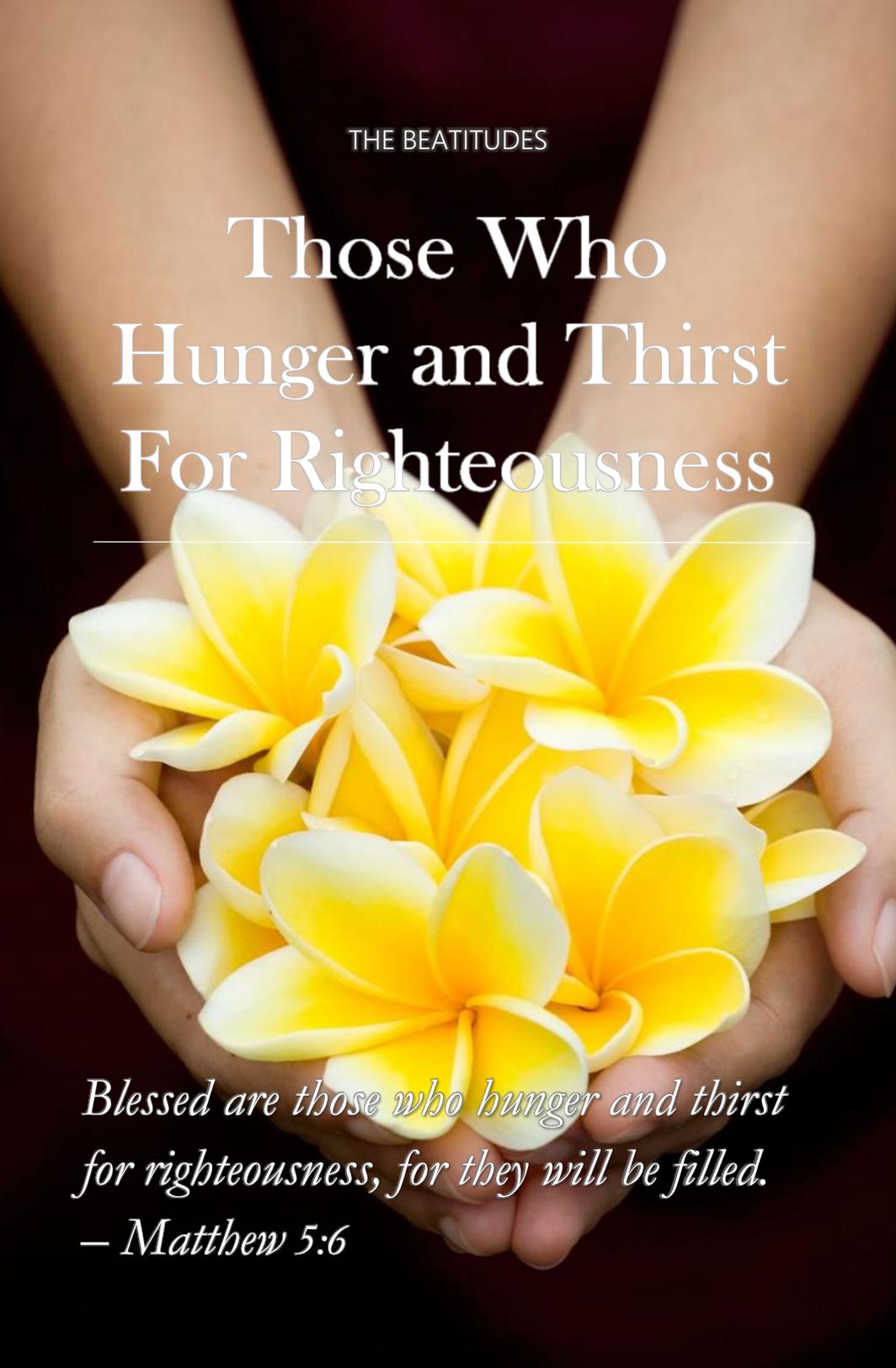
 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** <sup>4</sup>*Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.* – Matthew 5:4

 **TALK:** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* What does the comfort of God look like? What does it feel like to be comforted by God?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* God who is near, your assurances of comfort to those who mourn remind us of your unending nurturing care. We know we are not alone. Thank you for caring for us in our hardest times. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* When you mourn, God will comfort you. God is with you.

A pair of hands is shown from the top, holding a large bouquet of yellow and white flowers. The flowers are the central focus, with their petals overlapping and creating a vibrant, textured appearance. The hands are positioned at the top and bottom edges of the frame, framing the bouquet. The background is dark, making the colors of the flowers stand out.

THE BEATITUDES

# Those Who Hunger and Thirst For Righteousness

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*Blessed are those who hunger and thirst  
for righteousness, for they will be filled.*

*— Matthew 5:6*

# Those Who Hunger and Thirst For Righteousness

*Reminders of God's providing in our longing.*

As we dive into the Gospels, we can clearly see that Jesus' message and life reflect a call to action and a call to stand for and with the oppressed, the outsiders, the marginalized and the hurting. Advocating for all to live as children of God, receivers of God's promises and recipients of God's grace can get discouraging. There are so many hurdles and the hope for justice can seem distant. This beatitude is Jesus' acknowledgement of the struggle. Jesus says, I see you. You will be filled. Remember this hope (being filled, in this beatitude) belongs to you!

Bible reading for the week: Matthew 5:6

NOVEMBER

18



**SHARE** your highs and lows.



**READ** *Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled. – Matthew 5:6*



**TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* What does it mean to “hunger and thirst for righteousness?” What is righteousness?



**PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* God who is near, give us understanding, wisdom and a desire to understand your Word and your love for all people. Amen.



**BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* When you hunger and thirst for righteousness, God fills you. God is with you.

NOVEMBER

19

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** <sup>6</sup>*Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.* – Matthew 5:6

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* How have you longed for righteousness in your life?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* God who is near, in the places where we long for hope, peace, equality, justice and hope, fill us with your love that we may share it with all in need. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* When you hunger and thirst for righteousness, God fills you. God is with you.

NOVEMBER

20

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** <sup>6</sup>*Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.* – Matthew 5:6

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* Do you know someone who so desperately desires righteousness?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* God who is near, thank you for the efforts of those who are moved by your love to stand for the oppressed. Fill them with all they need to live out this calling of love. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* When you hunger and thirst for righteousness, God fills you. God is with you.

NOVEMBER

21

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** <sup>6</sup>*Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled. – Matthew 5:6*

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* How can you care for those who long for righteousness in their lives?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* God who is near, it is not always easy to know how to care for those who hunger and thirst for righteous. Equip us to care for those who stand in love for others. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* When you hunger and thirst for righteousness, God fills you. God is with you.

NOVEMBER

22

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** <sup>6</sup>*Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled. – Matthew 5:6*

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* What does it mean to you to be filled?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* God who is near, you fill us with blessing upon blessing! Send your Spirit to remind us to turn to you when we need to be filled. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* When you hunger and thirst for righteousness, God fills you. God is with you.

NOVEMBER

23

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** <sup>6</sup>*Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled. – Matthew 5:6*

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* Describe what it might look like for someone who hungers and thirsts for righteousness to be filled by God.

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* God who is near, the power of people coming to together to love and care for others helps us see your love lived out on earth. Thank you for filling us up with your love and empowering us to live it out! Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* When you hunger and thirst for righteousness, God fills you. God is with you.

NOVEMBER

24

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** <sup>6</sup>*Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled. –Matthew 5:6*

 **TALK:** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* What words of hope do you hear in this beatitude?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* God who is near, thank you for reminding us that you stand with us, provide for us, and love us through our struggles and needs. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* When you hunger and thirst for righteousness, God fills you. God is with you.

THE BEATITUDES

# The Peacemakers

---

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they  
will be called children of God.

– *Matthew 5:9*



# The Peacemakers

*Reminders of our identity.*

Creating peace is no easy task. Many of us long for peace for our minds, our hearts, our families, our friends, our communities and for our world. In this beatitude, Jesus assures identity as children of God to those who strive to make peace. As children of God, peacemakers are heirs of God's providing and receivers of God's presence and guidance. This makes the possibility of creating peace through how we serve, live, and work not just a hope, but a reality! Remember this hope (identity as a child of God, in this beatitude) belongs to you!

Bible reading for the week: Matthew 5:9

NOVEMBER

25



**SHARE** your highs and lows.



**READ** <sup>9</sup>*Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.*

– Matthew 5:9



**TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* What are the characteristics of a peacemaker?



**PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* God who is near, deepen our understanding of who a peacemaker is so that we may understand why they matter most to you. Amen.



**BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* Be confident peacemaker! You are a child of God. God is with you.

NOVEMBER

26

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** <sup>9</sup>*Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.*

– Matthew 5:9

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* Who are the peacemakers in your church, community, nation, and world?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* God who is near, open our eyes to your children, the peacemakers in our lives. May we see more of you through them. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* Be confident peacemaker! You are a child of God. God is with you.

NOVEMBER

27

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** <sup>9</sup>*Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.*

– Matthew 5:9

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* What conflicts in our world need peacemakers?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* God who is near, we pray that you would raise up peacemakers to stand in the conflicts of our world as a beacon of hope and reflections of your love. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* Be confident peacemaker! You are a child of God. God is with you.

NOVEMBER

28

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** <sup>9</sup>*Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.*

– Matthew 5:9

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* What roadblocks or dangers do peacemakers face?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* God who is near, hold peacemakers in your care, providing them with all they need to overcome obstacles and bring about reconciliation, love, and peace. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* Be confident peacemaker! You are a child of God. God is with you.

NOVEMBER

29

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** <sup>9</sup>*Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.*

– Matthew 5:9

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* Are you a peacemaker? Why or why not?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* God who is near, show us how we can be peacemakers in our lives. Give us courage, strength, love, hope and wisdom to work through conflict and hard situations. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* Be confident peacemaker! You are a child of God. God is with you.

NOVEMBER

30

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** <sup>9</sup>*Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.*

– Matthew 5:9

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* What does it mean to you when you hear that peacemakers are called children of God?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* God who is near, thank you for identifying us as your children. Help us to live out our calling to be your peacemakers in this world. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* Be confident peacemaker! You are a child of God. God is with you.

DECEMBER

1

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** <sup>9</sup>*Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.*

– Matthew 5:9

 **TALK:** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* What is the hope Jesus is offering in this beatitude to those who make peace?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* God who is near, as children of God, we are heirs of your providing. We are promised your presence. Thank you for walking with us and giving us all we need to be your peacemakers right now. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* Be confident peacemaker! You are a child of God. God is with you.

LIVING IN-BETWEEN

# Actively Waiting

---

*Look at the fig tree and all the trees; as soon as they sprout leaves you can see for yourselves and know that summer is already near.*

*- Luke 21:29-31*

# Living In-Between

## *Where the Children are Blessed*

*We actively wait in this time of anticipating Jesus' birth and return.*

We begin this Advent and Christmas season with words from Jesus that point us towards summer instead of winter! Summer is about new life, creation, and the things not yet seen. We find ourselves in winter as well, letting the old settle and even pass away as we look towards the new. It is in both places, both seasons, both ways that we live out our lives as Christians. We are called to a time in-between—a time of hope and a time of letting go for the new.

Bible readings for the week: Luke 21:25-36; Jeremiah 33:14-16; Psalm 25:1-10; 1 Thessalonians 3:9-13

DECEMBER

2



**SHARE** your highs and lows.



**READ** *There will be signs in the sun, the moon, and the stars, and on the earth distress among nations confused by the roaring of the sea and waves. People will faint from fear and foreboding of what is coming upon the world, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. -Luke 21:25-26*



**TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* In what seasons do you find new life? Is there a place for it in all seasons?



**PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* God of new life, come into our hearts this week and show us your promises. Amen.



**BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* Child of God, you are held in new life here, now and in all the in-betweens.

DECEMBER

3

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** *Then they will see 'the Son of Man coming in a cloud' with power and great glory. Now when these things begin to take*

*place, stand up and raise your heads, because redemption is drawing near. -Luke 21:27-28*

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* When have you been the most aware of God's presence?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* Jesus, thank you for coming into our lives at all times. Be with us now as we watch and wait for you. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* Child of God, you are held in new life here, now and in all the in-betweens.

DECEMBER

4

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** *Jesus said, "Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all things*

*have taken place. Heaven and earth will pass away but my words will not pass away." -Luke 21:31-32*

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* What promises in your life have others kept? How is God's promise that the word will not pass away a promise of hope for you?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* God, we pray this day to celebrate this gift of life and its beauty. We are humbled. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* Child of God, you are held in new life here, now and in all the in-betweens.

DECEMBER

5

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** *The days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will fulfill the promise I made to the house of Israel and the house of Judah.*

–Jeremiah 33:14

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* What is it like to watch and wait for something you are excited about?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* Jesus, come and fill our hearts with your love as we look for you each day. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* Child of God, you are held in new life here, now and in all the in-betweens.

DECEMBER

6

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** *In those days and that that time I will cause a righteous branch to spring up*

*for David; and he shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. In those days Judah will be saved and Jerusalem will live in safety. And this is the name by which it will be called: "The Lord is our righteousness." -Jeremiah 33:15-16*

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* What does it mean to be righteous? Where does our righteousness come from?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* God of righteousness, grant us your wisdom and your grace to live for justice in your world as promised through the baptismal waters. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* Child of God, you are held in new life here, now and in all the in-betweens.

DECEMBER

7

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** *Night and day we pray most earnestly that we may see you face to face and restore whatever is lacking in your faith. —1 Thessalonians 3:9-13*

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* What is it like to be with someone face to face? How, or in whom, do you see the face of God?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* Holy Spirit, show us your light and life as we encounter your face in the world. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* Child of God, you are held in new life here, now and in all the in-betweens.

DECEMBER

8

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** *To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul. O my God, in you I trust;*

*Do not let me be put to shame; Do not let my enemies exult over me. —Psalm 25:1-2*

 **TALK:** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* What does it mean to lift up your soul to God? How do we see hope in a broken world?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* God, bring us your grace as we live out your promise of entering the world. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* Child of God, you are held in new life here, now and in all the in-betweens.

LIVING IN-BETWEEN

# The Gift of Baptism

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The word of God came to John, son of Zechariah in the wilderness. He went into all the region around Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.

- *Luke 1:2-3*

# Living in Between...

## *Through the Gift of Baptism*

Baptism is a gift. It is a gift of repentance which gives us insight into our reality as children of God. And it is gift of new life that we may live into this new reality of those who are loved, called, and sent forth in this world that God made. This second week of Advent invites us to consider how we live in this way, in-between, practicing our faith and living the gift at the same time. As we walk daily with God, we walk in ways that we forgive and are forgiven, daily and forever entering into the fresh waters of baptismal grace.

Bible readings for the week: Luke 3:1-6, 68-79; Malachi 3:1-4; Philippians 1:3-11

DECEMBER

9



**SHARE** your highs and lows.



**READ** *In the fifteenth year of the reign of Emperor Tiberius... the word of God came to*

*John son of Zechariah in the wilderness. He went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. -Luke 3:1-3*



**TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* What do you know or remember of your baptism?



**PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* God of forgiveness and grace, forgive us when we are not living for you and guide us into your new life. Amen.



**BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* \_\_\_\_\_, Child of God, you have been sealed by the Holy Spirit and marked with the cross of Christ forever +.

DECEMBER

10

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** *See, I am sending my messenger to prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his*

*temple. The messenger of the covenant in in who you delight - indeed, he is coming, says the Lord of hosts. –Malachi 3:1*

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* How do you prepare for Jesus to be in your daily life?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* Jesus, enter into our homes, our jobs, our schools, our parks, and all the places we go so we may prepare your way and your love in our lives. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* \_\_\_\_\_, Child of God, you have been sealed by the Holy Spirit and marked with the cross of Christ forever +.

DECEMBER

11

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** *He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the descendants of Levi and refine them like*

*gold and silver, until they present offerings to the Lord in righteousness. –Malachi 3:3*

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* A refiner's fire can sound terrifying until we realize that God sees us like the gold and silver. Can you remember a time where through practice and "refinement" you improved dramatically at some skill?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* God, we pray this day to celebrate this gift of life and its beauty. We are humbled. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* \_\_\_\_\_, Child of God, you have been sealed by the Holy Spirit and marked with the cross of Christ forever +.

# DECEMBER 12

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** *I thank my God every time I remember you, constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you*

*because of your sharing in the gospel from the first day until now. –Philippians 1:3-5*

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* How is our baptism a sharing in the word for others?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* Jesus, thank you for being the word from God and sending us to live in your word. Be with us as we share the gospel with those you place on our path. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* \_\_\_\_\_, Child of God, you have been sealed by the Holy Spirit and marked with the cross of Christ forever +.

# DECEMBER 13

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** *And this is my prayer, that your love may overflow more and more with*

*knowledge and full insight to help you to determine what is best, so that in the day of Christ you may be pure and blameless, having produced the harvest of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ for the glory and praise of God. –Philippians 1:9-11*

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* What are ways your love can overflow at home and in the community for a neighbor?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* Gracious God, as you have blessed us through the waters of baptism, help us pour out ourselves in love for others. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* \_\_\_\_\_, Child of God, you have been sealed by the Holy Spirit and marked with the cross of Christ forever +.

# DECEMBER 14

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** *Thus he has shown the mercy promised to our ancestors, and has remembered his holy covenant, the oath that he swore to our ancestor Abraham, to grant*

*us that we, being rescued from the hands of our enemies, might serve him, in holiness and righteousness before him all our days.* –Luke 1:72-75

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* How do we continue to live in a covenant that was given so long ago?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* God of the covenant, grant us the will and the mercy to continue to live your gospel in word and truth. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* \_\_\_\_\_, Child of God, you have been sealed by the Holy Spirit and marked with the cross of Christ forever +.

# DECEMBER 15

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** *The child (John) grew and became strong in spirit, and he was in the wilderness until the day he appeared publicly to Israel.*

–Luke 1:80

 **TALK:** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* How do we continue to grow up strong in the spirit? How does this look at different ages and stages of life?

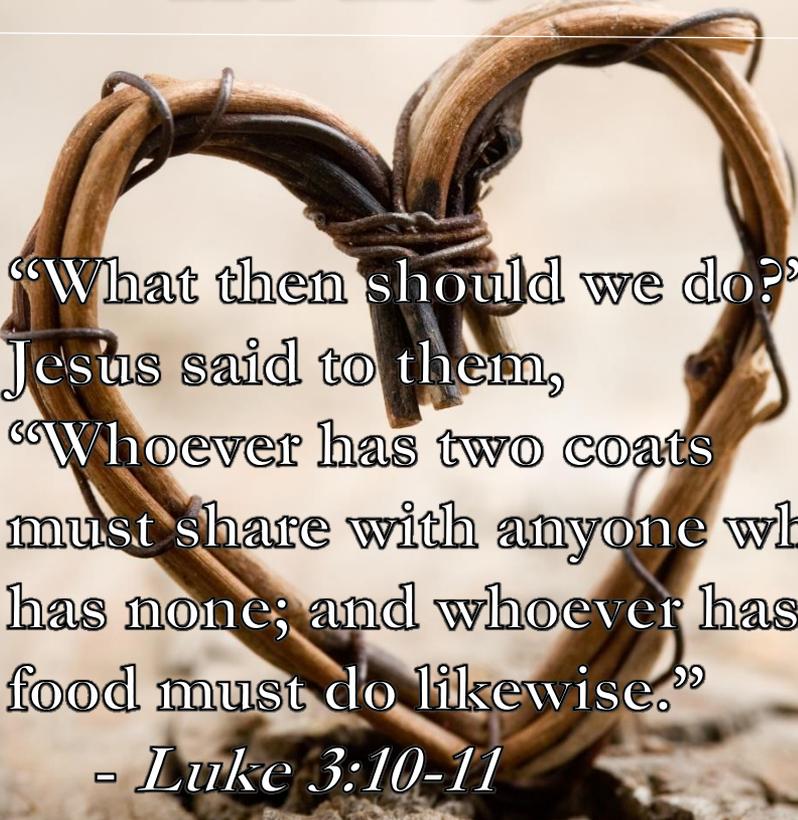
 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* God, you grow and move and continue to dwell within us in all the places we go. Grant us your mercy this day and always. Amen

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* \_\_\_\_\_, Child of God, you have been sealed by the Holy Spirit and marked with the cross of Christ forever +.

LIVING IN-BETWEEN

# Take Action in Love

---



“What then should we do?”  
Jesus said to them,  
“Whoever has two coats  
must share with anyone who  
has none; and whoever has  
food must do likewise.”

- *Luke 3:10-11*

# The Upside Down Kingdom

## *We take the action in love*

John's words call to us and they are sharp and pointed--turning towards God means leaving other ways of living behind. Leave behind the judgement. Leave behind the ways of the world. Leave behind even the fear that comes alongside. He then makes it simple for us--what are we to do? We are to live freely turning towards justice, towards the neighbor, towards one another in a way that offers up love and mercy. Advent is a time of waiting AND it's a time of action. This is not passive standing in line to see what comes up next, it is a time to watch and participate in God's activity in the world even while we wait for new life in Christ to come.

Bible readings for the week: Luke 3:7-18; Zephaniah 3:14-20; Isaiah 12:2-6; Philippians 4:4-7

DECEMBER

16



**SHARE** your highs and lows.



**READ** *What then should we do? Jesus said to them, "whoever has two coats, must share with anyone who has none; and whoever has food must do likewise." –Luke 3:10-11*



**TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* What ways do we share what we have? Make a list together of things you already have that you can share.



**PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* God of love, show us where your mercy is needed in the world. Amen.



**BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* Love from the Holy Spirit is in you and moves through you!

DECEMBER

17

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** *Do not fear, O Zion; do not let your hands grow weak. "The Lord, your God, is in your midst, a warrior who gives victory;*

*he will rejoice over you with gladness, he will renew you in his love; he will exult over you with loud singing. –Zephaniah 3:16-17*

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* What brings you reminders of God's renewal in love for you?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* Jesus, show us your love day by day and help us to live in joy through the spirit of your love. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* Love from the Holy Spirit is in you and moves through you!

DECEMBER

18

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** *Surely God is my salvation; I will trust, and will not be afraid, for the Lord God is my strength and my might; he has become*

*my salvation. With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation. –Isaiah 12:2-3*

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* What helps you to trust and not be afraid in the promise of God's joy?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* God of joy, send us forth with your love and remind us that our strength comes from this joy of living life in you. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* Love from the Holy Spirit is in you and moves through you!

DECEMBER  
19

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** *Give thanks to the Lord, call on his name; make known his deeds among the nations; proclaim that his name is exalted.*

*Sing praises to the Lord, for he has done gloriously; let this be known in all the earth. Shout aloud and sing for joy, O royal Zion, for great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel. —Isaiah 4-6*

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* Gratitude is a way of living out giving thanks to God--in what ways do you give thanks this day? This season?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* God, we give you thanks in all things. Bring your joy and love into daily lives. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* Love from the Holy Spirit is in you and moves through you!

DECEMBER  
20

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** *Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near.*

*—Philippians 4:4-5*

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* In what ways can you show gentleness towards others this week?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* Lord, you are near. Open our eyes and hearts to see and know your grace. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* Love from the Holy Spirit is in you and moves through you!

DECEMBER

21

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** <sup>6</sup>*Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to*

*God.* <sup>7</sup>*And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. —Philippians 4:6-7*

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* What are worries that you or those you love have? Share them together and with God and hear words of promise that the God of peace dwells with you.

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* God of peace, your gentleness and grace surpass our understanding. Guard our hearts and help us to release our worries and lift them to you in joy. Amen

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* Love from the Holy Spirit is in you and moves through you!

DECEMBER

22

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** <sup>15</sup>*As the people were filled with expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be*

*the Messiah,* <sup>16</sup>*John answered all of them by saying, "I baptize you with water; but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. <sup>17</sup>His winnowing fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire."* <sup>18</sup>*So, with many other exhortations, he proclaimed the good news to the people. Luke 3:15-18*

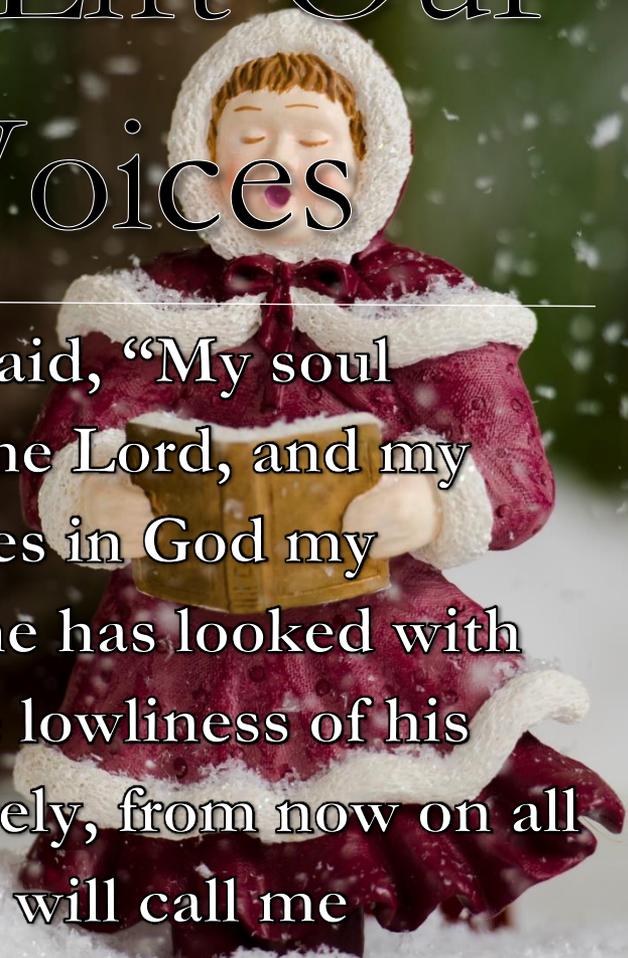
 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* What does it mean that Jesus will baptize with the Holy Spirit? How are water and spirit a part of baptism today?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* God of spirit, water and fire, bring your love into our world so that the good news may be proclaimed to all people. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* Love from the Holy Spirit is in you and moves through you!

LIVING IN-BETWEEN

# We Lift Our Voices



And Mary said, “My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant. Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed.” -*Luke 1:46-48*

# Living In-Between

## *We lift our voices*

Living in-between means embracing moments when we can raise our voices in song, in speech, and even in action. Mary's song, The Magnificat, catches us in this in-between because it is an ancient song and a new song all at once. We are singing of the story of God coming into the world and we are singing of hope for a new tomorrow. Christians can be heard singing not only with our voices and music, but with our gifts of time and money and energy put forth into caring for those in need. Our song is one that is fulfilled in the coming of Christ and one that is waiting to be sung again and again with each new day and year. Come Emmanuel, come into our week and into our lives fully dwelling with us.

Bible readings for the week: Luke 2:1-20; Isaiah 9:2-7; Psalm 96

DECEMBER

23



**SHARE** your highs and lows.



**READ** <sup>39</sup>*In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill*

*country, <sup>40</sup>where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. <sup>41</sup>When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit <sup>42</sup>and exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. <sup>43</sup>And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? <sup>44</sup>For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for joy. <sup>45</sup>And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord." –Luke 1:39-45*



**TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* In this last day of waiting for Christmas, what about God's word leaps with joy in you?



**PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* God of Mary and Elizabeth, send your spirit into this world to continue to be made flesh within us. Amen.



**BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* May the joy of Jesus leap in your heart!

DECEMBER

24

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** *In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn. —Luke 2:1-7*

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* Emmanuel means “God With Us”. How do you see God with us today?

 **PRAY** for one another’s highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* Jesus, we give thanks for your birth and your coming into the world. We praise you for your dwelling with us. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* Emmanuel! Jesus is born! God is with you!

DECEMBER

25

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** <sup>8</sup>*In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night.* <sup>9</sup>*Then an angel of the Lord stood before*

*them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified.* <sup>10</sup>*But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: <sup>11</sup>to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord.*

*<sup>12</sup>This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.” <sup>13</sup>And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, <sup>14</sup>“Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!”* —Luke 2:8-14

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* The angels promise there is nothing to fear. How is the Christmas story still a sign of peace and promise today that we need not fear?

 **PRAY** for one another’s highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* Jesus, Emmanuel, come live in our hearts and cast out all fear. Amen

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* Merry Christmas! May the joy of God live in you!

DECEMBER

26

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** <sup>2</sup>*The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness— on them*

*light has shined. <sup>3</sup>You have multiplied the nation, you have increased its joy; they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as people exult when dividing plunder. —Isaiah 9:2-3*

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* How do we bring the light of Christ into dark places?

 **PRAY** for one another’s highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* God of light, shine your grace upon this world and bring peace. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* You are a light in the dark that shines Christ’s own light!

DECEMBER  
27

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** <sup>46</sup>And Mary said, “My soul magnifies the Lord, <sup>47</sup>and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, <sup>48</sup>for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his

servant. Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed; <sup>49</sup>for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name. <sup>50</sup>His mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation. <sup>51</sup>He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts. <sup>52</sup>He has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly; <sup>53</sup>he has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty. <sup>54</sup>He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, <sup>55</sup>according to the promise he made to our ancestors, to Abraham and to his descendants forever.” —Luke 1:46-55

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* Mary’s song is one that praises God and calls for justice to be brought forth. How can our songs, voices, and our actions sing this same tune?

 **PRAY** for one another’s highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* Be in our voices, be in our words, be in our actions, and send your Spirit so that we may bring light in your name. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* God of Wonder you have blessed us as a gift to others.

## DECEMBER 28

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** <sup>6</sup>*For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father,*

*Prince of Peace.*<sup>7</sup>*His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace for the throne of David and his kingdom. He will establish and uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time onward and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this. - Isaiah 9:6-7*

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* Which name for God means the most to you? How can we live out this name in our world?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* Jesus, born to us and for us, may all your names bring peace and grace to this world and may we walk with you in all that we are called to say and do. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* God has given you a voice that you might proclaim the love of Christ.

## DECEMBER 29

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** <sup>1</sup>*O sing to the Lord a new song; sing to the Lord, all the earth. <sup>2</sup>Sing to the Lord, bless his name; tell of his salvation*

*from day to day. <sup>3</sup>Declare his glory among the nations, his marvelous works among all the peoples. <sup>4</sup>For great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised; he is to be revered above all gods.*

*-Psalm 96:1-4*

 **TALK:** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* What are your favorite hymns or songs of this season? Spend time just listening and enjoying to them or sing along together!

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* God of music and praise, we send our voices and our hearts up to you in thanksgiving. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* Sing a song in your heart and know it is heard by God!

LIVING IN-BETWEEN

# A Still Small Voice

A silhouette of a person standing on a dark, jagged rock formation. The person's arms are raised, with one hand pointing towards the top of the word 'Small' in the title. The background is a bright, hazy yellow and white, suggesting a sunrise or sunset over a landscape.

When they had finished everything required by the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favor of God was upon him.

- *Luke 2:39-40*

# Living In-Between

## *A still small voice that cries for me.*

The not-so-grand entrance of Jesus is followed by the not-so-memorable early years of Jesus. We have little written about it. Luke says, “He grew and became strong.” Is that all you’ve got Luke? And though it would be nice to be able to learn about these times, the reality is that no one was documenting at this time. It wasn’t remembered. In our own lives so much of our story is not shaped by the highlight reel, but by the everyday events. Our lives do not consist of the mountains and the valleys as much as the time lived in-between.

Bible readings for the week: Luke 2:39-52; Psalm 148; Colossians 3:12-17

DECEMBER

30



**SHARE** your highs and lows.



**READ** <sup>39</sup>*When they had finished everything required by the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth.* <sup>40</sup>*The*

*child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favor of God was upon him. –Luke 2:39-42*



**TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* Share a story that your parents told about you as a child that they will always remember.



**PRAY** for one another’s highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* Gracious God, you are with us as we grow and learn and in all the times in-between. Guide us in your way. Amen.



**BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* May you grow strong in wisdom and love through Jesus.

DECEMBER

31

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** <sup>46</sup>*After three days they found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions.*

<sup>47</sup>*And all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers.* <sup>48</sup>*When his parents saw him they were astonished; and his mother said to him, “Child, why have you treated us like this? Look, your father and I have been searching for you in great anxiety.”* <sup>49</sup>*He said to them, “Why were you searching for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father’s house?”* —Luke 2:46-49

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* Who has influenced you the most in your faith life?

 **PRAY** for one another’s highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* Jesus, lead us together as a community and teach us to know your words and love. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* May you know you are found in God’s infinite love.

JANUARY

1

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** <sup>1</sup>*Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord from the heavens; praise him in the heights!* <sup>2</sup>*Praise him, all his angels; praise him, all his host!* <sup>3</sup>*Praise him, sun and moon; praise him,*

*all you shining stars!* <sup>4</sup>*Praise him, you highest heavens, and you waters above the heavens!* <sup>5</sup>*Let them praise the name of the Lord, for he commanded and they were created.* —Psalm 148:1-5

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* As you start a new year what are you most hopeful about?

 **PRAY** for one another’s highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* God, we praise you for all you have given and all that you are in creation. Hallelujah for all that you have given this day and in this new year to come. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* May God grant you peace and wisdom in this new year!

JANUARY

2

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** <sup>12</sup>*As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience.*

–Colossians 3:12

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* “Clothe yourself in...” what part of Paul’s list is easiest for you? Which is the hardest?

 **PRAY** for one another’s highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* Jesus, help us to reach out to your created world with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness and patience. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* You are chosen and sent forth by God!

JANUARY

3

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** <sup>13</sup>*Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has*

*forgiven you, so you also must forgive. –Colossians 3:13*

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* Share a time where you worked in a group on a project that was successful.

 **PRAY** for one another’s highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* Holy Spirit, bear with us as we live together and send your spirit of forgiveness and peace to our families and communities and the world. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* God has forgiven you and upheld you in love.

JANUARY

4

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** <sup>14</sup>*Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.* <sup>15</sup>*And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in*

*the one body. And be thankful. –Colossians 3:14-15*

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* What time of the day are you most at peace? Why?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* Holy Spirit, infuse us with your love and bring the peace of Christ to dwell in each of us together. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* May the peace of Christ rule in your heart.

JANUARY

5

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** <sup>16</sup>*Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual*

*songs to God.* <sup>17</sup>*And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. –Colossians 3:16-17*

 **TALK:** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* Who are the people in your life who you will listen to when they challenge you to change?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* God, guide us as we live in harmony with your people. Help us to reach out and act in grace and service to you. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* May the word of Christ live in you

LIVING IN-BETWEEN

# Welcoming the Magi

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When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy.

- *Matthew 2:9-10*

# Living In-Between

## *Welcoming the Magi*

One outsider is Herod trying to kill Jesus. The other are three foreigners who seek to honor Jesus' presence. We stand at the stable door always wanting to share the gift of Christ Jesus with others, and still aware of the dangers in our world. "Living in-between" this week reminds us that we are Saint and Sinner; that we are broken and blessed; that we are set free and fully captive to sin. In this juxtaposition we are reminded that it is not our job to find our way out. It is our job to point others to the one who will come to redeem us and lead us all into the light.

Bible readings for the week: Matthew 2:1-12; Isaiah 60:1-6-4; Ephesians 3:1-12; Matthew 5:14-16

JANUARY

6



**SHARE** your highs and lows.



**READ** *When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star*

*that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. <sup>10</sup>When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. –Matthew 2:9-10*



**TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* It is said that life is a journey not a destination. However, share a time that the destination truly did overpower the journey itself.



**PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* God of the stars and light, rest the light of your grace upon us throughout our journeys and keep us steadfast in your promise. Amen.



**BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* You are a light for the world that cannot be hid. Shine!

JANUARY

7

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** <sup>11</sup>*On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening*

*their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. –Matthew 2:11*

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* Who of your friends or family has always been the best at picking out gifts? Who is the worst at picking out gifts?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* Jesus, our gift is from you and in you. Help us to open that gift in our hearts and share with others. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* You are a light for the world that cannot be hid. Shine!

JANUARY

8

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** *Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you. <sup>2</sup>For darkness shall cover the earth, and*

*thick darkness the peoples; but the Lord will arise upon you, and his glory will appear over you. <sup>3</sup>Nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn. <sup>4</sup>Lift up your eyes and look around; they all gather together, they come to you; your sons shall come from far away, and your daughters shall be carried on their nurses' arms. Isaiah –60:1-4*

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* Share a time when you completed a significant project and you felt proud of your accomplishment.

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* Holy Spirit, come with your light into our nation, into our homes, into the very places that need your care and peace. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* You are a light for the world that cannot be hid. Shine!

JANUARY

9

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** <sup>5</sup>*In former generations this mystery was not made known to humankind, as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit: <sup>6</sup>that is, the Gentiles have become fellow*

*heirs, members of the same body, and sharers in the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel. –Ephesians 3:5-6*

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* Imagine you lived when your grandparents did. What would have been the best part of living in their generation instead of your own? What would have been the hardest?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* Holy Spirit, you have sent us to the world to share in your promise. Thank you for this gift and for this grace. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* You are a light for the world that cannot be hid. Shine!

JANUARY

10

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** <sup>7</sup>*Of this gospel I have become a servant according to the gift of God's grace that was given me by the working of his power.*

<sup>8</sup>*Although I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given to me to bring to the Gentiles the news of the boundless riches of Christ, <sup>9</sup>and to make everyone see what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God who created all thing. -Ephesians 3:7-9*

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* Paul says he is “the very least of all the saints.” Can you think of a time when you felt humbled in the work you were doing because of the hard work done by those around you?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* God of grace, as we live in your word breathe into us your power and guide us to walk in the mystery of your grace. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* You are a light for the world that cannot be hid. Shine!

## JANUARY 11

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** <sup>10</sup>*so that through the church the wisdom of God in its rich variety might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the*

*heavenly places.* <sup>11</sup>*This was in accordance with the eternal purpose that he has carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord,* <sup>12</sup>*in whom we have access to God in boldness and confidence through faith in him.*

—Ephesians 3:10-12

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* Where in your life are you blessed by the richness of diversity?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* Holy Spirit, give us confidence in faith and in your word to live well in the diversity of this world. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* You are a light for the world that cannot be hid. Shine!

## JANUARY 12

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** <sup>14</sup>*“You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid.* <sup>15</sup>*No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket,*

*but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house.* <sup>16</sup>*In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.*

—Matthew 5:14-16

 **TALK:** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* Share a gift that you have that someone else helped you to see in yourself.

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* Light of the world, shine upon us and send your light through us so that all may see your goodness. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* You are a light for the world that cannot be hid. Shine!

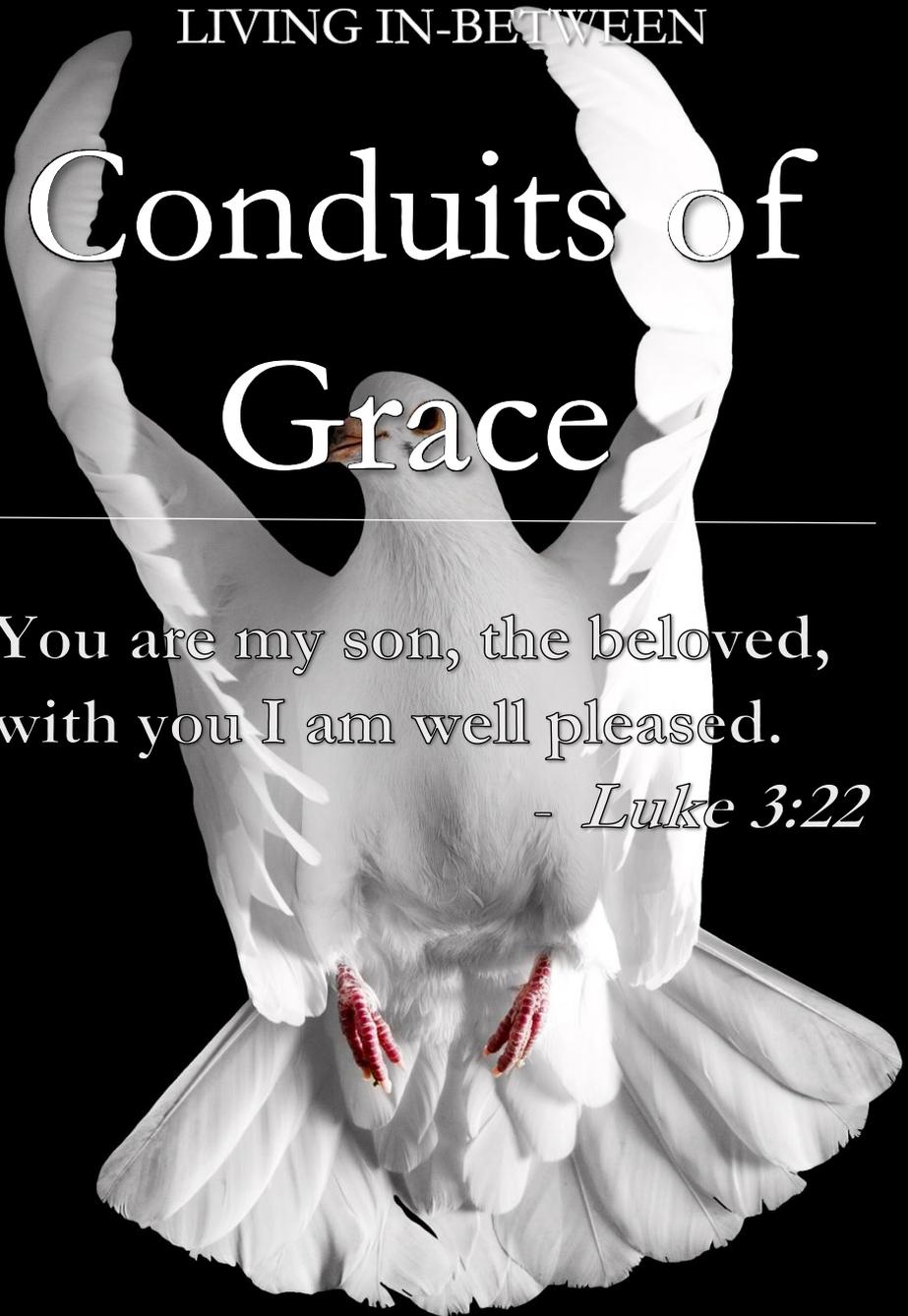
LIVING IN-BETWEEN

# Conduits of Grace

---

You are my son, the beloved,  
with you I am well pleased.

- *Luke 3:22*



## Conduits of Grace

God is here! If you could witness any moment in scripture, the voice of God booming down, and a dove descending upon Jesus would be a good one. We have the opportunity to ponder the gift of the Holy Spirit as it enters our own lives. It isn't usually quite as clear as this moment, but God is here now as God was there at this moment written about by Luke. How can we be conduits of grace? How might we point to the "God moments" that not everyone is seeing? How can we train our eyes to be more of aware of what God is up to here and now?

Bible readings for the week: Luke 3:21-22; Isaiah 43:1-7; Acts 8:14-17; Matthew 28:19-20

JANUARY  
13



**SHARE** your highs and lows.



**READ** <sup>21</sup>Now when all the people were baptized, and when Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, the heaven was

*opened, <sup>22</sup>and the Holy Spirit descended upon him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased." –Luke 3:21-22*



**TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* What is your favorite symbol to represent God? Why?



**PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* God, as you opened up the heavens to your beloved son, so open our hearts to hear your word and know you claim us as sons and daughters. Amen.



**BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* You are a child of God, beloved and claimed.

JANUARY  
14

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** *But now thus says the Lord, he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine. –Isaiah 43:1*

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* Quick, you are scared as a child in your bed. How did you get rid of the scary thoughts?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* Jesus, help us have no fear and be with us in our fear. Guide us in your ways so we may walk strong in your love. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* You are a light for the world that cannot be hid. Shine!

JANUARY  
15

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** *When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you. –Isaiah 43:2*

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* God promises to always be with you. When is that promise most helpful? When have you been wanting more?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* Holy Spirit come, and send your life so that we are not consumed or overtaken in our fears, worries, and situations that are broken. Grant us the grace to see your light and love. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* God walks with you on all the pathways of your journey.

JANUARY  
16

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** *For I am the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior. I give Egypt as your ransom, Ethiopia and Seba in exchange for you. Because you are precious*

*in my sight, and honored, and I love you, I give people in return for you, nations in exchange for your life. —Isaiah 43:3-4*

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* This text recalls times of the past when God saved the people of Israel. What times in your past are you most thankful that you had faith?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* Holy Spirit, you have sent us to the world to share in your promise. Thank you for this gift and for this grace. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* You are a light for the world that cannot be hid. Shine!

JANUARY  
17

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** *Do not fear, for I am with you; I will bring your offspring from the east, and from the west I will gather you; I will say to the north, "Give them up," and to the south,*

*"Do not withhold; bring my sons from far away and my daughters from the end of the earth— everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made."*

*—Isaiah 43:5-7*

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* Usually when someone says, "Do not fear" it is because there is something to be afraid of. When you look at the world today where do you need God to calm your fears?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* God of all peace, bring your calm into our hearts and into our lives. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* Do not fear! Christ is with you always.

# JANUARY 18

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** <sup>14</sup>Now when the apostles at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them. <sup>15</sup>The two went down and prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit <sup>16</sup>(for as yet the Spirit had not come upon any of them; they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus). <sup>17</sup>Then Peter and John laid their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit. —Acts 8:14-17

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* Peter and John went to help outsiders learn more about Christ. Share a time when you felt overwhelmed by the job you had before you.

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* Holy Spirit, come to us so we may receive you and bring you into lives that are yearning to know your presence. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* You have been given the Holy Spirit and sent forth to serve.

# JANUARY 19

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup>and teaching them to obey everything that I

have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age." —Matthew 28:19-20

 **TALK:** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* What can we do to better equip people in church to share God's word? What would help you to be better equipped?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* God, grant us your wisdom and grace to go into the world bringing the life known in baptismal waters. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* Go! And remember the Holy Spirit goes with you!

BODY OF CHRIST

# Uniquely Gifted for the Common Good

To each is given the  
manifestation of the Spirit  
for the common good.

— *1 Corinthians 12:7*

# Uniquely Gifted for the Common Good

*God's Spirit gifts us for building up the body of Christ.*

God's Spirit resides in each one of us. This Spirit has uniquely gifted each person. The Spirit has given you gifts. These gifts are different from other people's gifts. Sometimes we may wish that we had different gifts. Sometimes we may think that the gift we have is not unusual and think that "everyone does that". The Spirit is at work in you, gifting you and calling you to share these gifts with others. These gifts from the Spirit are unique in that the gift is given to us but other people are the ones who benefit when we use the gift. We find joy and are filled with the Spirit as we share this gift.

Bible readings for the week: 1 Corinthians 12:1-11

JANUARY

20



**SHARE** your highs and lows.



**READ** <sup>1</sup> *Now concerning spiritual gifts, brothers and sisters, I do not want you to be*

*uninformed. –1 Corinthians 12:1*



**TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* What do you think the difference is between a talent and a spiritual gift? How have you used your talents or spiritual gifts today?



**PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* Gracious God, thank you for all the gifts and talents that you give to each one of us. Amen.



**BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* You are blessed to be a blessing.

JANUARY

21

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** *<sup>4</sup>Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; <sup>5</sup>and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; <sup>6</sup>and there are*

*varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. –1 Corinthians 12:4-6*

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* Sometimes we see other people's gifts easier than we see our own. What are the variety of gifts you see in each other or in important friends or family members in your life?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* Gracious God, help me to see the gifts you have given me. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* You are gifted by the Spirit.

JANUARY

22

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** *<sup>4</sup>Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; <sup>5</sup>and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; <sup>6</sup>and there are*

*varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. –1 Corinthians 12:4-6*

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* Everyone has a gift. What are the gifts you see in people that you don't like or can't understand?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* Holy Spirit, open my eyes to see the gifts you have given others. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* May God's Spirit fill you with love and understanding.

JANUARY

23

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** *To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.*

– 1 Corinthians 12:7

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* Each is given a gift from the Spirit. What gifts has the Spirit given you?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* Giving God, help us to see that you have made us each unique and beautiful. Amen

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* You are important and you matter.

JANUARY

24

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** *To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.*

– 1 Corinthians 12:7

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* Each is given a gift for the common good. How have you shared your gifts for the common good today?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* Loving God, you love us no matter what we do. Help us we share our gifts so that others see your love through us. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* May God grant you purpose and joy.

JANUARY

25

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** <sup>8</sup>*To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same*

*Spirit, <sup>9</sup>to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, <sup>10</sup>to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the discernment of spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. –1 Corinthians 12:8-10*

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* Sometimes other people's gifts are strange or unusual to us because they are different from our gifts. Who did you encounter today who was different from you?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* Holy God, we thank you for the variety of gifts that you give to your people. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* You are wonderfully made. There is no one like you.

JANUARY

26

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

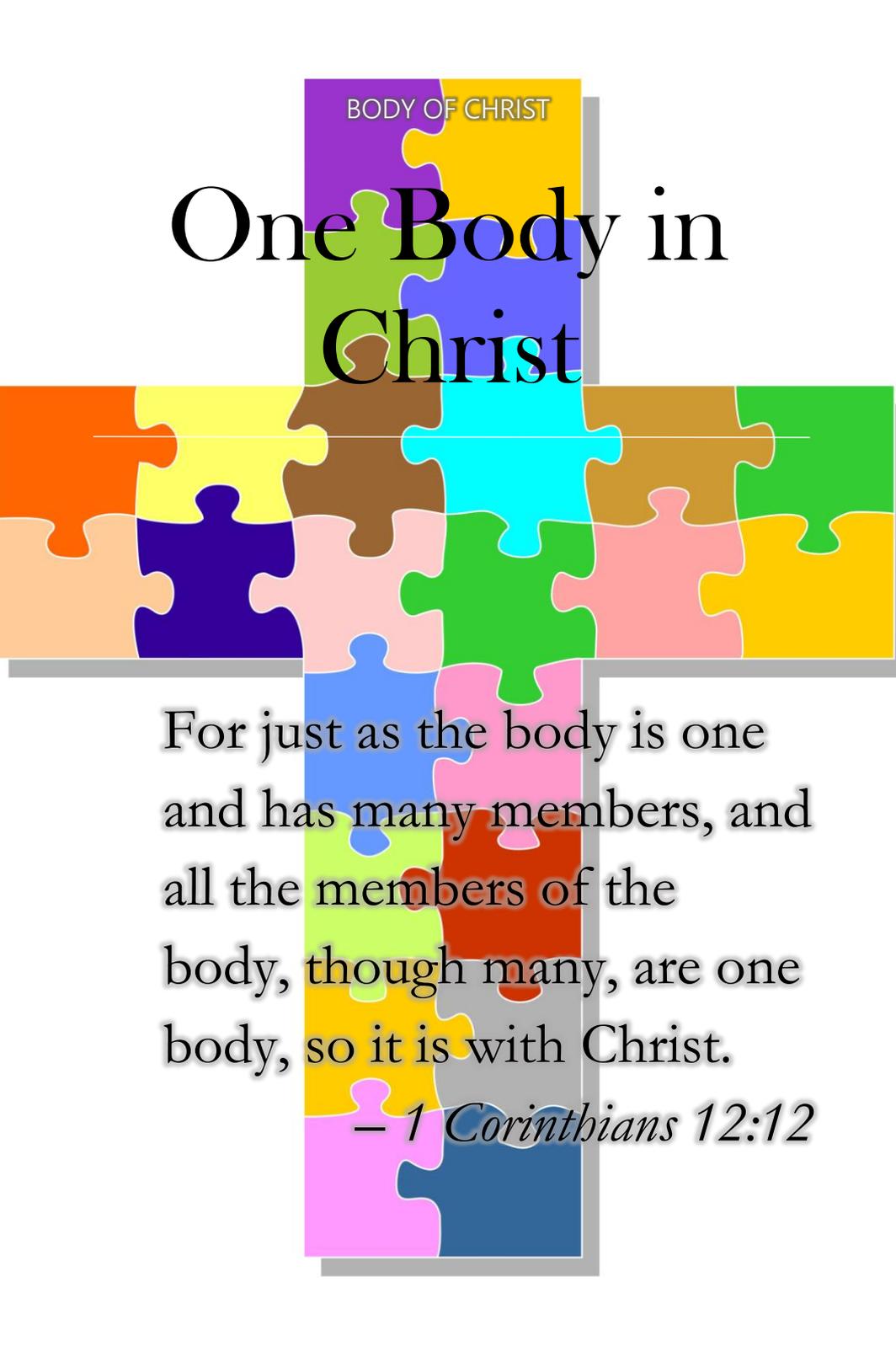
 **READ** <sup>11</sup>*All these are activated by one and the same Spirit, who allots to each one individually just as the Spirit chooses.*

*–1 Corinthians 12:11*

 **TALK:** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* The Spirit gives gifts as the Spirit chooses. How do you think that the Spirit's choices may be different from your choices?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* God, thank you for gifting me as you desire and choosing me to be your beloved child. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* The Spirit has chosen you.



BODY OF CHRIST

# One Body in Christ

For just as the body is one  
and has many members, and  
all the members of the  
body, though many, are one  
body, so it is with Christ.

– *1 Corinthians 12:12*

# One Body in Christ

*Each of us is unique and important to the body. We are brought together through baptism into the body of Christ.*

A physical body is comprised of many parts – eyes, ears, pinkie toes, just to name a few. When one part is not working right, even just a small part, the whole body suffers. In our physical bodies each and every part is important and needed. The same is true in the body of Christ, the church, each and every part is important and needed. We are united into one body in Christ and when each part works together amazing things can happen.

Bible readings for the week: 1 Corinthians 12:12-31a

JANUARY

27



**SHARE** your highs and lows.



**READ** <sup>12</sup>*For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ.*

– 1 Corinthians 12:12



**TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* How is the church like our bodies? What are the different parts of the body of Christ (the church) that you experienced today?



**PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* Gracious God, thank you for your church which is the body of Christ gathered together here on earth. Amen.



**BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* You are a part of the body of Christ.

JANUARY

28

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** <sup>13</sup>*For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body — Jews or Greeks, slaves or free — and we were all made to*

*drink of one Spirit. —1 Corinthians 12:13*

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* There are no distinctions in the body of Christ – not Jew or Greek, slave or free. What are some differences that we see between ourselves and others? How are these differences seen by God?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* Jesus, thank you for differences and help us to see our unity in your Spirit. Amen

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* You are one with Christ in the Spirit.

JANUARY

29

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** <sup>13</sup>*For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body — Jews or Greeks, slaves or free — and we were all made to*

*drink of one Spirit. —1 Corinthians 12:13*

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* We are united to Christ and to each other in baptism. What are important parts of baptism to you?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* God, thank you for uniting us together in the body of Christ.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* God's Spirit is poured out on you.

JANUARY

30

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** <sup>14</sup>*Indeed, the body does not consist of one member but of many.*

– 1 Corinthians 12:14

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* How can we work together with others to make a difference in our world today?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* God, bring together all our unique gifts and talents so that we can be one body together in Christ doing your work with our hands. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* You are a member of God's family.

JANUARY

31

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** <sup>15</sup>*If the foot would say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," that would not make it any less a part of the*

*body.* <sup>16</sup>*And if the ear would say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," that would not make it any less a part of the body.* <sup>17</sup>*If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole body were hearing, where would the sense of smell be?* <sup>18</sup>*But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose.* – 1 Corinthians 12:15-18

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* What do you think is the most important part of the body? Who do you think is the most important person at church? Who do you think that God thinks the most important person is?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* Jesus, help us appreciate the uniqueness of each person and the gifts they bring to our families, our church, our community and our world. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* God made you and there is no one like you.

FEBRUARY

1

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** <sup>24</sup>*But God has so arranged the body, giving the greater honor to the inferior member, <sup>25</sup>that there may be no dissension*

*within the body, but the members may have the same care for one another. <sup>26</sup>If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honored, all rejoice together with it.*

—1 Corinthians 12:24-26

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* What do you feel when you see other people who are sad? Happy? Is there someone God was calling you to care for today?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* Holy God, we give thanks for times when we rejoice and pray for you to be with us when we suffer. Help us to care for others who are suffering. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* God honors you and fills you with love.

FEBRUARY

2

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** <sup>27</sup>*Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it!*

—1 Corinthians 12:27

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* What does it mean to you that you are the body of Christ?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* God, we give you thanks that you have made us part of your body. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* You are the body of Christ.

BODY OF CHRIST

# United in Love

---

Love never ends.

– *1 Corinthians 13:8a*

# United in Love

*Love is what holds relationships together.*

All you need is love. It sounds so simple and yet it is so hard. Love is patient, love is kind, love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude (1 Cor. 12:4-5). We hear these words often read at weddings speaking about romantic love. However, this kind of love is agape love, unconditional love, and is love that God has for God's people. This is the ideal of love that God shows for us and that we seek to live out in our lives through all our relationships. This agape love that comes from God to us and flows out of us is what holds relationships and communities together.

Bible readings for the week: 1 Corinthians 13:1-13

FEBRUARY

3



**SHARE** your highs and lows.



**READ** *<sup>1</sup>If I speak in the tongues of mortals and of angels, but do not have love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. <sup>2</sup>And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. <sup>3</sup>If I give away all my possessions, and if I hand over my body so that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing.*  
– 1 Corinthians 13:1-3



**TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* If these things are done without love, why are they are not as important? How have you shown love today?



**PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* Loving God, help all of our actions flow out of love. Amen.



**BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* May you be filled with God's love.

FEBRUARY

4

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** *Love is patient; love is kind;*  
—1 Corinthians 13:4a

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* How have you been patient today? How has God been patient with you?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* Jesus, thank you for your patience with us when we do not love as you call us to love. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* God's patience and kindness bless you this day.

FEBRUARY

5

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** *love is not envious or boastful or arrogant<sup>5</sup> or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; <sup>6</sup>it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth.*

— 1 Corinthians 13:4b-6

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* We cannot have this kind of love without the help of others in our family or community. How can you help each other or have others help you when you are envious, rude, irritable, or resentful?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* God, help us to be filled with your love when we feel envious, boastful, arrogant, rude, irritable or resentful. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* God's amazing love and forgiveness are yours!

FEBRUARY

6

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** <sup>7</sup>*It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.*  
<sup>8</sup>*Love never ends. – 1 Corinthians 13:7-8*

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* How do you feel that God's love for you never ends?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* Eternal God, we give you thanks that your love for us NEVER ends. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* You forever belong to a gracious and loving God.

FEBRUARY

7

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** <sup>8</sup>*Love never ends. But as for prophecies, they will come to an end; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will come to an end. –1 Corinthians 13:8*

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* What are some of the things that you think are important in your life? Will they last forever?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* Eternal God, help us to focus on the things that will last forever. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* May the Creator God grant you purpose and joy.

FEBRUARY

8

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** <sup>12</sup>*For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then we will see face to face. Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known. – 1 Corinthians 13:12*

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* What are questions that you don't have an answer for that you wish you had an answer for?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* Holy God, help us to trust you with the hard questions that we don't have answers for, knowing that you are a God who loves us forever. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* God sees you face to face and loves you completely.

FEBRUARY

9

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** <sup>13</sup>*And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love. – 1 Corinthians 13:13*

 **TALK:** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* Which of these do you think is greatest – faith, hope, or love? Why?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* Jesus, thank you for the gifts of faith, hope and love. Help us to share these gifts with others. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* May God fill you with faith, hope, and love for this day.

BODY OF CHRIST

# Community in Communion

---

For as often as you eat this  
bread and drink this cup,  
you proclaim the Lord's  
death until he comes.

– *1 Corinthians 11:26*

## Community in Communion

*We are united around the Lord's Supper with diverse people of every time and place.*

Usually when we eat meals we eat with those who are closest to us, our friends and our family. When we gather around the Lord's Supper we gather with a diverse group of people, many of whom we would never eat with on a regular basis. They may be of a different socio-economic group, ethnicity, political party, or age than those with whom we usually eat. God gathers a widely diverse group of people together and unites us in Christ bringing us Christ's presence and forgiveness in the bread and wine, the body and blood of Jesus.

Bible readings for the week: 1 Corinthians 11:17-26

FEBRUARY

10



**SHARE** your highs and lows.



**READ** <sup>17</sup>Now in the following instructions

*I do not commend you, because when you come together it is not for the better but for the worse. <sup>18</sup>For, to begin with, when you come together as a church, I hear that there are divisions among you; and to some extent I believe it.*

*– 1 Corinthians 11: 17-18*



**TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* What divisions do you see in your church today?



**PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* Gracious God, there are so many things that seek to divide us one against another. Send your Spirit of unity to recognize that we are different, neither better nor worse, and that in you we are all children of God. Amen.



**BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* You are united to Christ.

FEBRUARY

11

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** <sup>20</sup>*When you come together, it is not really to eat the Lord's supper. <sup>21</sup>For when the time comes to eat, each of you goes ahead*

*with your own supper, and one goes hungry and another becomes drunk. –1 Corinthians 11:20-21*

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* What makes the Lord's Supper different from other meals you eat?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* Jesus, thank you for the gift of your supper which is freely given to all. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* May God fill you with love and kindness.

FEBRUARY

12

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** <sup>22</sup>*What! Do you not have homes to eat and drink in? Or do you show contempt for the church of God and humiliate those*

*who have nothing? –1 Corinthians 11:22*

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* Who are people in your community who have nothing? How is God calling you to care for them?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* God, open our hearts to see those who have nothing and move us to provide them love and care. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* You are God's hands and feet!

FEBRUARY

13

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** <sup>23</sup>*For I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you,*

– 1 Corinthians 11:23a

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* Who has passed along their faith to you?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* God, we give you thanks for all the saints who have gone before us and passed along their faith to us. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* You belong God.

FEBRUARY

14

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** *the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took a loaf of bread, <sup>24</sup>and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said,*

*"This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me."*

–1 Corinthians 11:23b-24

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* Jesus gave us the Lord's Supper on the night he was betrayed by Judas. Jesus knew he was going to be betrayed by Judas and he still gave Judas this wonderful gift of his body and blood. Have you ever been hurt by a friend before? Have you been able to forgive them for what they did?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* Jesus, you call us to forgive others as we have been forgiven. Give us strength to forgive those who betray us. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* You are a forgiven child of God.

FEBRUARY

15

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** <sup>25</sup>*In the same way he took the cup also, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." –1 Corinthians 11:25*

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* Jesus gave us his presence in the bread and wine of communion so that he would be with us. Jesus' new covenant brings us the gift of forgiveness. What are other gifts that God has given you today?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* Holy God, we give you thanks for the many gifts you give us, especially the gifts of forgiveness and your presence with us in the bread and wine of communion. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* God is with you now and forever.

FEBRUARY

16

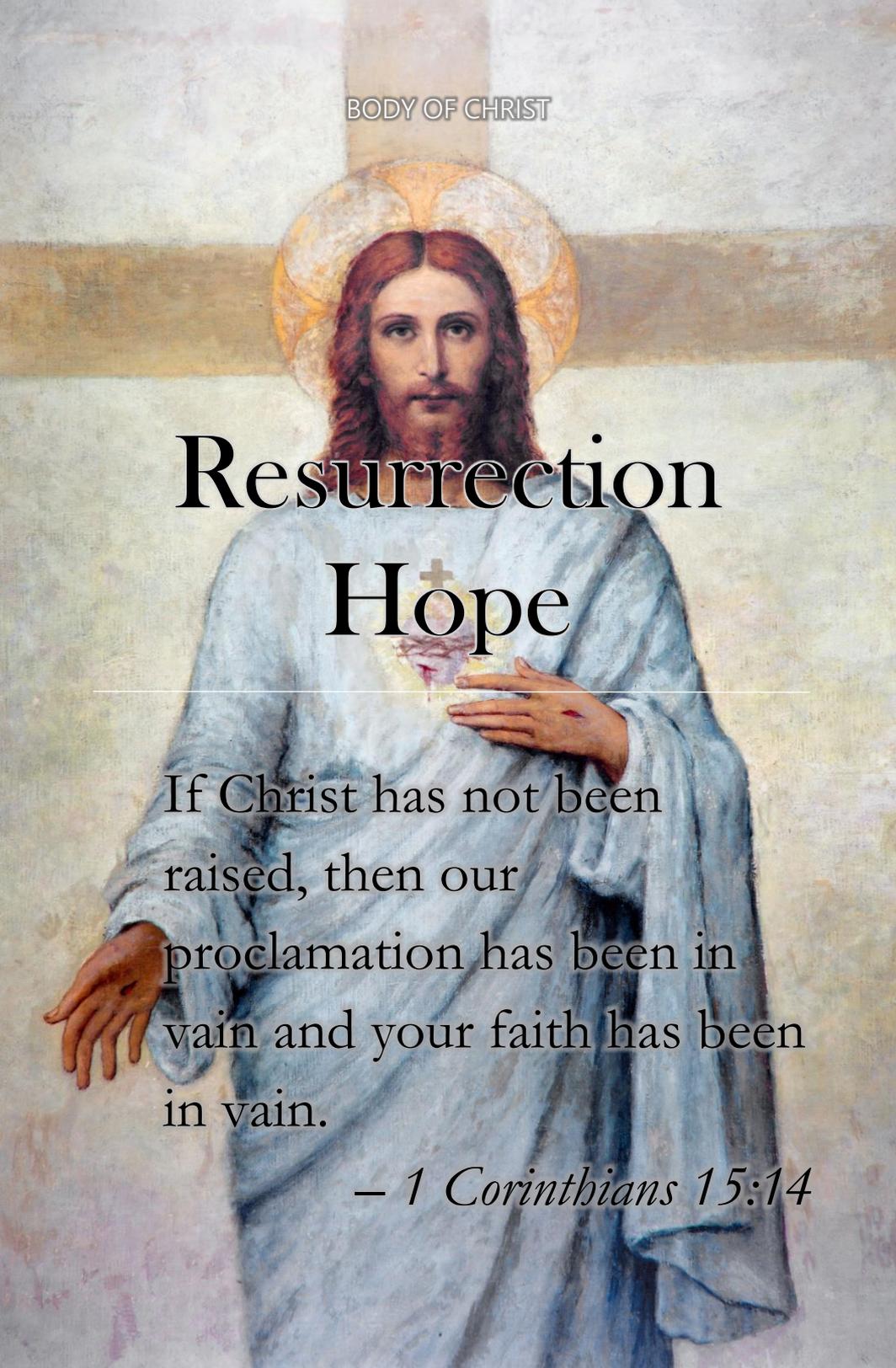
 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** <sup>26</sup>*For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. –1 Corinthians 11:26*

 **TALK:** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* What do you think that the world will be like when Christ comes again?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* Stir up your power and come. We long for your coming again and rejoice that we are joined together with you now and forever. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* You are created and loved by God!



BODY OF CHRIST

# Resurrection Hope

---

If Christ has not been raised, then our proclamation has been in vain and your faith has been in vain.

– *1 Corinthians 15:14*

# Resurrection Hope

*Belief in the resurrection requires faith.*

There is much historical evidence that Jesus truly lived in first century Palestine. There is no scientific proof of the resurrection. There is no video tape of Jesus rising from the dead. During the time of the apostles and in our time there are many other explanations of what happened that make logical sense. It takes faith to believe that Jesus died on the cross and then rose again three days later and truly is resurrected from the dead. All we have are stories of Jesus' resurrection passed from one generation to the next. It takes faith to believe those stories are true. Faith does not always make logical sense. Faith instead brings us something beyond logic. Faith and belief bring us life and hope.

Bible readings for the week: 1 Corinthians 15:12-20

FEBRUARY

17



**SHARE** your highs and lows.



**READ** <sup>12</sup>Now if Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, how can some of you

say there is no resurrection of the dead? <sup>13</sup>If there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ has not been raised;

– 1 Corinthians 15:12-13



**TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* Who shared their faith about Jesus as the Son of God who rose from the dead to help you believe?



**PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* Gracious God, we thank you for those who have shared their faith with us and who help us to have faith. Amen.



**BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* May you be filled with faith and hope.

FEBRUARY

18

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** <sup>14</sup> *and if Christ has not been raised, then our proclamation has been in vain and your faith has been in vain.*

– 1 Corinthians 15:14

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* Faith gives us eyes to see God at work all around us so that our faith is not in vain. Where did you see God at work in your life today?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* Jesus, thank you showing up in big and small ways and giving us glimpses of the resurrection here and now. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* May God's resurrection hope bless you this day.

FEBRUARY

19

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** <sup>16</sup> *For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised.*

– 1 Corinthians 15:16

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* Jesus rising from the dead brings us hope and life because it shows us that there is nothing that can separate us from God. What difficult things did you have to face today? Did you feel God's presence with you? If so, then how?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* God, thank you for being with us in the challenges of life and bringing new life out of difficult situations. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* God's amazing grace is yours!

FEBRUARY

20

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** <sup>17</sup>*If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins.*

–1 Corinthians 15:17

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* What are sins that you experienced today or this week?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* God, we thank you for your forgiveness that comes to us through rising again. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* You are forever a forgiven child of God.

FEBRUARY

21

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** <sup>17</sup>*If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins.* <sup>18</sup>*Then those also who have died in*

*Christ have perished.* –1 Corinthians 15:17-18

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* Who are loved ones who are special to you who have died in your life?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* Jesus, we give you thanks that our faith is not in vain and that nothing can separate us from your love, not even death. Thank you for giving us eternal life. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* You are blessed with life with Christ today and always.

FEBRUARY

22

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** *If for this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied. <sup>20</sup>But in fact Christ has been raised*

*from the dead, the first fruits of those who have died.*

–1 Corinthians 15:19-20

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* What do you look forward to when you get to heaven? What are ways you can see glimpses of heaven already here on earth?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* Holy God, we give you thanks for the promise of eternal life and for the all the ways you love and care for us here and now. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* God has blessed you with love and grace.

FEBRUARY

23

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** *If for this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied. <sup>20</sup>But in fact Christ has been raised*

*from the dead, the first fruits of those who have died.*

–1 Corinthians 15:19-20

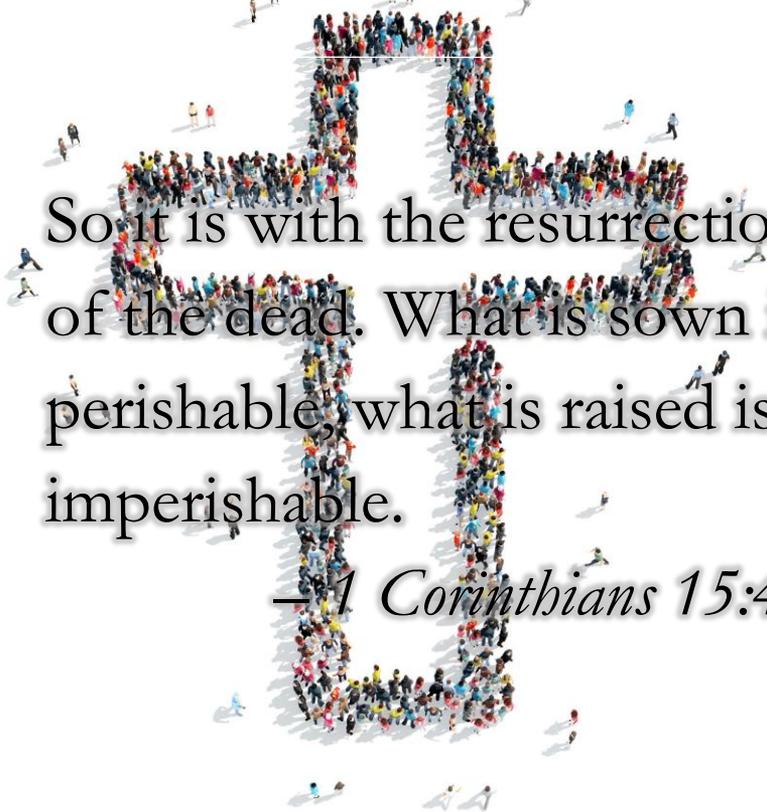
 **TALK:** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* It takes faith to believe that Christ rose from the dead. This faith brings us hope here and now. Who are people who need to hear about God's love in their lives? How can you show God's love to them?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* God, help us to be a glimpse of the resurrection for someone who needs hope in their lives. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* God loves you!

BODY OF CHRIST

# Resurrection Life - Now and Forever



So it is with the resurrection  
of the dead. What is sown is  
perishable, what is raised is  
imperishable.

— *1 Corinthians 15:42*

# Resurrection Life – Now and Forever

*God can bring resurrection to eternal life, but God also brings new life here and now.*

Often when we think about the resurrection, we think about life after death, our eternal life in heaven. This is resurrection life, but it is more than just this. Jesus' resurrection also impacts our life here and now. The promise of the resurrection is that God can overcome even the worst that life has to offer and bring life out of death. Many times we experience many small deaths in life, when we encounter transitions, difficulties, challenges, and loss. In these times, God comes to bring new life and hope in unexpected ways. God also calls us to bring new life and resurrection to those who we encounter who are struggling or in need. Resurrection is happening every day. Our God is an awesome God who brings life from death.

Bible readings for the week: 1 Corinthians 15:35-38, 42-50

FEBRUARY

24



**SHARE** your highs and lows.



**READ** <sup>35</sup>*But someone will ask, "How are the dead raised? With what kind of body do*

*they come?"* <sup>36</sup>*Fool! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies. –1 Corinthians 15:35-36*



**TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* We have all kinds of questions that we do not have the answers for. Only God knows everything. What are questions you have for God?



**PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* Gracious God, thank you for our questions and our doubts. Help us know that you are with us always and can handle all our questions. Amen.



**BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* May you be filled with knowledge and faith.

FEBRUARY

25

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** <sup>35</sup>*But someone will ask, "How are the dead raised? With what kind of body do they come?"* <sup>36</sup>*Fool! What you sow does not*

*come to life unless it dies.* <sup>37</sup>*And as for what you sow, you do not sow the body that is to be, but a bare seed, perhaps of wheat or of some other grain.* <sup>38</sup>*But God gives it a body as he has chosen, and to each kind of seed its own body.* —1 Corinthians 15:35-38

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* Sometimes things have to stop or die before something new can start. Are there places new life has come forth in your life because something else has died (or stopped)? Are there things in your life that you may be called to have die (quit doing) so that new life can come forth?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* Jesus, thank you for bringing life from death. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* May God's new life fill you this day.

FEBRUARY

26

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** <sup>42</sup>*So it is with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable, what is raised is imperishable.* —1 Corinthians 15:42

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* Who are loved ones that you would look forward to seeing when there is the resurrection of the dead?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* God, we give you thanks for all the saints who have died and gone before us and who are a great cloud of witnesses who surround us. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* You are united to God forever.

FEBRUARY

27

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** <sup>43</sup>*It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. –1 Corinthians 15:43*

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* God can do amazing things. God can take hard and difficult times and situations and turn them around to bring new life. Where have you seen God working to bring new life today?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* God, thank you for being with us in our difficult times. Give us patience as we wait to see how you can bring forth new life in those hard times. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* You are crowned with God's glory and power.

FEBRUARY

28

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** <sup>44</sup>*It is sown a physical body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a physical body, there is also a spiritual body.*

– 1 Corinthians 15:44

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* God makes us body and spirit together. Each of us is unique. There is no one like you. What are things that you love about your physical body that God has made?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* Creator God, we give you thanks for our bodies. Helps us to love ourselves and appreciate the beauty that is in each person. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* You are a beautiful child of God. You are important. You matter.

## MARCH

# 1

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** <sup>48</sup>*As was the man of dust, so are those who are of the dust; and as is the man of heaven, so are those who are of heaven.* <sup>49</sup>*Just*

*as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we will also bear the image of the man of heaven. –1 Corinthians 15:48-49*

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* We are people of dust who make mistakes and will ultimately die. We are people of heaven who are forgiven and who are given eternal life in Christ. Where did you see places of dust and death today in your life? Where did you see glimpses of heaven here on earth today?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* Holy God, we give you thanks that you have given us the glimpses of heaven each day. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* You bear the image of heaven.

## MARCH

# 2

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** <sup>50</sup>*What I am saying, brothers and sisters, is this: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable*

*inherit the imperishable. –1 Corinthians 15:50*

 **TALK:** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* Someone gets an inheritance when another person dies. We receive an inheritance from God because of Jesus' death and resurrection. What are the gifts from God to you that you appreciate today?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* God, thank you for the inheritance that you give us through Jesus. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* You are a beloved child of God, marked with the cross of Christ forever.

GOD ON THE MOVE

# Up On the Mountain

---

Then from the cloud came a voice that said, “This is my Son, my Chosen, listen to him!”

— *Luke 9:35*

# God Moves...

## *Up The Mountain*

*Jesus goes up a mountain to pray, and is transfigured before his disciples.*

This Sunday marks a transition from focusing on the body of Christ to God on the move. Jesus' body is transfigured before his disciples and they see a glimpse of his glory. Jesus goes up a mountain to pray with his disciples and while there suddenly the great law giver, Moses and the great prophet, Elijah of old appear with Jesus and speak with him about his departure which will happen in Jerusalem. We get a glimpse into what Jesus' future holds when he goes down the mountain and is on the move toward his death on the cross and his resurrection.

Bible readings for the week: Luke 9:28-36

MARCH

3



**SHARE** your highs and lows.



**READ** <sup>28</sup>Now about eight days after these sayings Jesus took with him Peter and John

*and James, and went up on the mountain to pray. – Luke 9:28*



**TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* Jesus went up a mountain to pray. Where do you go when you want to talk to God?



**PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* Gracious God, thank you for always listening to us. Help us to take time to talk to you in prayer. Amen



**BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* God is always with you.

MARCH

4

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** <sup>29</sup>*And while he was praying, the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became dazzling white. —Luke 9:29*

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* Sometimes we see God in magnificent ways. Where or how have you seen God's magnificence?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* Jesus, we thank you for coming to us in big and small ways. Help us to see you in the magnificent and in the ordinary ways you appear to us. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* May Jesus' light shine on you this day.

MARCH

5

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** <sup>30</sup>*Suddenly they saw two men, Moses and Elijah, talking to him. <sup>31</sup>They appeared in glory and were speaking of his departure, which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem. <sup>32</sup>Now Peter and his companions were weighed down with sleep; but since they had stayed awake, they saw his glory and the two men who stood with him. —Luke 9:30-32*

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* Moses and Elijah appeared with Jesus. Who are special people in your life who help you out when you are having difficult times?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* God, we thank you for all the people who help us out when we need someone to listen to us or help us figure out what direction you are leading us in our lives. Amen

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* You are filled with God's glory.

MARCH

6

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** <sup>33</sup>*Just as they were leaving him, Peter said to Jesus, "Master, it is good for us to be here; let us make three dwellings, one*

*for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah" — not knowing what he said. —Luke 9:33*

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* Peter speaks before thinking. Have you ever said something that you wished that you had not said? How did you feel?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* God, help us to take time to think about what we say before we say it. Forgive us when we say things that we don't mean. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* You are loved and forgiven by God.

MARCH

7

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** <sup>34</sup>*While he was saying this, a cloud came and overshadowed them; and they were terrified as they entered the cloud. <sup>35</sup>Then*

*from the cloud came a voice that said, "This is my Son, my Chosen listen to him!" —Luke 9:34-35*

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* What helps you to listen to God speaking in your life? How do you hear Jesus?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* Jesus, help us to listen to you. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* You are God's child.

MARCH

8

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** <sup>34</sup>While he was saying this, a cloud came and overshadowed them; and they were terrified as they entered the cloud. <sup>35</sup>Then

from the cloud came a voice that said, "This is my Son, my Chosen listen to him!" –Luke 9:34-35

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* Where did you see God choosing you today to do his will? What gifts has God given you that make you special?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* Holy God, we give you thanks that each of us is given unique gifts and that there is no one like us. Help us to celebrate that you have chosen us. Amen

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* You are chosen, you are beloved.

MARCH

9

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** <sup>36</sup>When the voice had spoken, Jesus was found alone. And they kept silent and in those days told no one any of the things they

had seen. –Luke 9:36

 **TALK:** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* The disciples kept silent about what they had seen until after Jesus rose from the dead. What they saw on the mountain didn't make any sense until Jesus rose from the dead. Have you ever had an experience where you needed time to see how God was working in that situation?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* God, give us patience when we cannot see how you are at work. Give us eyes to see and ears to hear how you are working in our lives each day. Amen

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* God will never leave you.

GOD ON THE MOVE

# Into The Desert



Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness, where for forty days he was tempted by the devil.

– *Luke 4:1-2a*

# God Moves...

## *Into the Desert*

Jesus' forty-day move into the desert mirrors our own experiences of temptation, emptiness, or feelings of abandonment. Wherever we go, we know that we can rely on Jesus to walk with us and show us the way. Moving is hard, but Jesus has been there before. In this season of Lent, remember that you have a Savior who has promised to walk beside you every step.

Bible readings for the week: Luke 4:1-13

MARCH

10



**SHARE** your highs and lows.



**READ** <sup>1</sup>*Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit,*

*returned from the Jordan and was led by the*

*Spirit in the wilderness, <sup>2</sup>where for forty days he was tempted by the devil. He ate nothing at all during those days, and when they were over, he was famished. –Luke 4:1-2*



**TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* In the Bible, wilderness is often a place of trial, testing, and temptation. It is always a struggle, and it can be purifying. Considering that, when have you found yourself in a wilderness? What does it mean to you that Jesus has been there first?



**PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* Gracious God, thank you for moving into the wilderness with me. Teach me to trust and rely on you always. Amen.



**BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* Wherever you go, God is with you.

MARCH

11

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** <sup>1</sup>*Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness, <sup>2</sup>where for forty days*

*he was tempted by the devil. He ate nothing at all during those days, and when they were over, he was famished. –Luke 4:1-2*

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* Jesus was just baptized in the previous verses, and so the Scripture says he was “full of the Holy Spirit.” He knows who he is. When have you felt full of the Holy Spirit? How did that help you live faithfully in wilderness experiences, trials, or temptations?

 **PRAY** for one another’s highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* God, thank you for your Holy Spirit. Fill us with this gift, so that we may know who we are and whose we are. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* You are filled with the Holy Spirit.

MARCH

12

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** <sup>2</sup>*...for forty days [Jesus] was tempted by the devil. He ate nothing at all during those days, and when they were over,*

*he was famished. <sup>3</sup>The devil said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become a loaf of bread." <sup>4</sup>Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'One does not live by bread alone.'" –Luke 4:2-4*

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* What would your life be like if you “fed” every one of your wants and desires?

 **PRAY** for one another’s highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* God, give bread to those who hunger, and a hunger for justice to those who have bread. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* May God feed you with every good thing.

MARCH

13

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** <sup>5</sup>Then the devil led him up and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. <sup>6</sup>And the devil said to him, "To you

I will give their glory and all this authority; for it has been given over to me, and I give it to anyone I please. <sup>7</sup>If you, then, will worship me, it will all be yours." <sup>8</sup>Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him.'"

-Luke 4:5-8

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* To what or to whom do you sometimes give more attention than God?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* God, help me to focus my life on you and worship you above all other things. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* You belong to a gracious God.

MARCH

14

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** <sup>9</sup>Then the devil took him to Jerusalem, and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple, saying to him, "If you are the Son

of God, throw yourself down from here, <sup>10</sup>for it is written, 'He will command his angels concerning you, to protect you,' <sup>11</sup>and 'On their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.'" -Luke 4:9-11

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* When have you questioned whether God is trustworthy, or cares enough to protect you from bad things happening?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* Jesus, even when we face difficult challenges, help us to remember that you are with us. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* Jesus is with you always!

MARCH

15

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** <sup>12</sup>Jesus answered him, "It is said, 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'"

<sup>13</sup>When the devil had finished every test, he

*departed from him until an opportune time. –Luke 4:12-13*

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* Jesus uses Scripture against every temptation. How does Scripture give you the right words for trusting in God?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* Lord, keep us steadfast in your Word. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* God's Word is written onto your heart.

MARCH

16

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** <sup>1</sup>Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness, <sup>2</sup>where for forty days

*he was tempted by the devil. He ate nothing at all during those days, and when they were over, he was famished*

*–Luke 4:1-2*

 **TALK:** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* What does it mean that the Spirit drove Jesus into the wilderness? Have you ever felt a wilderness experience might be God's way of showing you something?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* God, guide us through the wilderness and teach us your ways. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* God's Spirit is with you always!

GOD ON THE MOVE

# Past All Obstacles

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*[Jesus] said to them, "Go and tell that fox for me, 'Listen, I am casting out demons and performing cures today and tomorrow, and on the third day I finish my work.*

*— Luke 13:32*

# God Moves...

## *Past All Obstacles*

Jesus won't let Herod's threats or the people's opposition keep him from fulfilling his loving purpose. He moves beyond all obstacles to show God's love to all.

Bible readings for the week: Luke 13:31-35

MARCH

17



**SHARE** your highs and lows.



**READ** <sup>31</sup>*At that very hour some Pharisees came and said to him, "Get away from here, for Herod wants to kill you." -Luke 13:31*



**TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* Usually the Pharisees and Jesus are opponents, but here they look out for his welfare, warning him that his life is in danger. Have you ever received help – or given help – to someone with whom you have disagreed? Be on the lookout this week!



**PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* God, move us beyond all obstacles with your love. Amen.



**BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* God loves and forgives you!

MARCH

18

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** <sup>32</sup>*He said to them, "Go and tell that fox for me, 'Listen, I am casting out demons and performing cures today and tomorrow, and on the third day I finish my work. –Luke 13:32*

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* Where do you see a need for Jesus' healing today, either in the world or in your own life?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* Jesus, thank you for the gift of healing in my life. Help me bring healing to others in your name. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* May Jesus bring you healing and wholeness today.

MARCH

19

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** <sup>32</sup>*He said to them, "Go and tell that fox for me, 'Listen, I am casting out demons and performing cures today and tomorrow,*

*and on the third day I finish my work. <sup>33</sup>Yet today, tomorrow, and the next day I must be on my way, because it is impossible for a prophet to be killed outside of Jerusalem.' -Luke 13:32-33*

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* Jesus' reference to the third day looks to his resurrection from the dead, the greatest obstacle he overcame. Where do you experience new life in Jesus?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* God, we celebrate the new life you have given us in the death and resurrection of your Son Jesus. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* God gives you new life, in the name of Jesus.

MARCH

20

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** <sup>33</sup>*Yet today, tomorrow, and the next day I must be on my way, because it is impossible for a prophet to be killed outside of*

*Jerusalem.' <sup>34</sup> Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! –Luke 13:33-34a*

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* Why are people who speak God's truth often in conflict with what the world sees as power and wealth? How are power and wealth sometimes an obstacle to faith?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* God, move past those things that are obstacles to your love. Help us to keep our eyes on you. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* God moves past all obstacles to bring you peace, in the name of Jesus.

MARCH

21

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** <sup>34</sup>*Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often have I desired to*

*gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing! –Luke 13:34*

 **TALK** about how the Bible might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* What obstacles might keep people from experiencing God's loving embrace, even when they know about it?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* Jesus, gather us and all people under your wings of mercy. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* God embraces and protects you in love and mercy.

MARCH

22

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** <sup>32</sup> *He said to them, "Go and tell that fox for me, 'Listen, I am casting out demons and performing cures today and tomorrow,*

*and on the third day I finish my work... <sup>34b</sup> How often have I desired to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing! –Luke 13:32,34b*

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* Jesus is the hen, and evil is the fox! How does Jesus protect us from evil?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* Jesus, thank you for gathering us under your wings of protection. Through your death, you have given us life. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* Hide yourself in the safety and love of Jesus.

MARCH

23

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** <sup>35</sup> *See, your house is left to you. And I tell you, you will not see me until the time comes when you say, 'Blessed is the one*

*who comes in the name of the Lord.'* –Luke 13:35

 **TALK:** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* In a few weeks we will welcome Jesus with the words, "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!" In what ways do you welcome Jesus today?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* Jesus, you welcome us even when we don't welcome you. Turn our hearts to your love today. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* Blessed are you, child of God, in the name of Jesus!

GOD ON THE MOVE

# Over the Fence

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A photograph of two men standing on a wooden fence, looking over it. The man on the left is wearing a white long-sleeved shirt and blue jeans. The man on the right is wearing an orange t-shirt and khaki pants. The fence is made of vertical wooden planks. The background shows a cloudy sky and some green grass at the bottom.

Then [Jesus] told this parable: "A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came looking for fruit on it and found none."

- *Luke 13:6*

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# God Moves...

## *Over the Fence*

You may have heard the phrase “The grass is always greener on the other side of the fence.” It’s human nature to look around and compare our lives to someone else’s, or to an idea or a dream. But Jesus brings us back to focus on realities that will bring change and growth in our own backyard.

Bible readings for the week: Luke 13:1-9

MARCH

24



**SHARE** your highs and lows.



**READ** <sup>1</sup>*At that very time there were some present who told him about the Galileans*

*whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices.*

–Luke 13:1



**TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* The crowd reports the violence that Pilate has brought on Galileans, hoping that Jesus will do something about it, but Jesus affirms that these calamities are not God’s doing. What events in the world do you wish you could get away from, or that Jesus would bring an end to? How do you experience God with you in the midst of those events?



**PRAY** for one another’s highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* Gracious God, thank you for moving over the fence to be with us when bad things happen. Help us to feel your presence. Amen.



**BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* God is with you, in the name of Jesus.

MARCH

25

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** <sup>1</sup>*At that very time there were some present who told him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their*

*sacrifices. <sup>2</sup>He asked them, "Do you think that because these Galileans suffered in this way they were worse sinners than all other Galileans?"* –Luke 13:1-2

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* Jesus challenges the popular assumption that bad things happen to bad people. How can you show God's love to those who have experienced tragedy?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* Jesus, thank you for your presence, especially in difficult times. Give us courage to be your presence to those who face tragedy and loss. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* Jesus blesses you to be a blessing to others.

MARCH

26

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** <sup>2</sup>*[Jesus] asked them, "Do you think that because these Galileans suffered in this way they were worse sinners than all other*

*Galileans? <sup>3</sup>No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all perish as they did.* –Luke 13:2-3

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* "Unless you repent..." Jesus says that all people are sinners, but all people will be freed from their sin if they repent. How does it feel to be forgiven of something you know you've done wrong? How does it feel to be compared with someone you think is obviously more of a sinner than you?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* God, we thank you that you forgive all people. Give us hearts of repentance, so that we may know the joy of your forgiveness. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* Jesus' forgiveness belongs to you!

MARCH

27

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** <sup>4</sup>“Or those eighteen who were killed when the tower of Siloam fell on them — do you think that they were worse offenders

than all the others living in Jerusalem? <sup>5</sup>No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all perish just as they did.” -Luke 13:4-5

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* Jesus mentions another tragedy that had happened at that time, but denies that it was an act of God because of someone’s sin. A second time, he calls for repentance: “Unless you repent, you will all perish...” Jesus is not warning of physical death, but of life without repentance. How might a person who follows Jesus experience the same tragedy differently from someone who does not follow Jesus?

 **PRAY** for one another’s highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* God, help me to find joy even during a tragedy, and share that joy right where I am. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* You belong to a gracious God.

MARCH

28

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** <sup>6</sup>Then [Jesus] told this parable: “A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came looking for fruit on it and found

none.” -Luke 13:6

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* Jesus calls us to stop looking over the fence at others, and instead notice the dead spots in our own lives. Where do you see good fruit in your life? Where do you lack good fruit?

 **PRAY** for one another’s highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* Jesus, help us to stop judging others, and instead to focus on bearing good fruit. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* May God grant you the faith to bear good fruit.

MARCH

29

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** <sup>6</sup>Then [Jesus] told this parable: "A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came looking for fruit on it and found

none. <sup>7</sup>So he said to the gardener, 'See here! For three years I have come looking for fruit on this fig tree, and still I find none. Cut it down! Why should it be wasting the soil?' <sup>8</sup>He replied, 'Sir, let it alone for one more year, until I dig around it and put manure on it. <sup>9</sup>If it bears fruit next year, well and good; but if not, you can cut it down.'" -Luke 13:6-9

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* God gives second chances! When have you received a second chance and been nurtured by it?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* Holy God, thank you for second chances. May our lives reflect your love and forgiveness. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* God has blessed you with second chances. Live free!

MARCH

30

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** <sup>8</sup>"[The gardener] replied, 'Sir, let it alone for one more year, until I dig around it and put manure on it. <sup>9</sup>If it bears fruit next

year, well and good; but if not, you can cut it down.'" -Luke 13:6-9

-Luke 13:6-9

 **TALK:** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* In the Easter story Mary mistook Jesus for a gardener. Perhaps that is no mistake, because in this parable it is the gardener who gives second chances. How is Jesus a gardener of fruit in your life?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* God, cultivate the dead places in my life, so that those places come to life again and bear good fruit. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* May God bless you with abundant life.

GOD ON THE MOVE

# Down The Road



But while he was still far off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion; he ran and put his arms around him and kissed him. — *Luke 15:20*

# God Moves...

## *Down the Road*

God is always running to meet us, even when we are far off from God and have squandered God's grace.

Bible readings for the week: Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32

MARCH

31



**SHARE** your highs and lows.



**READ** <sup>1</sup>*Now all the tax collectors and sinners were coming near to listen to him.*

<sup>2</sup>*And the Pharisees and the scribes were grumbling and saying, "This fellow welcomes sinners and eats with them." -Luke 15:1-2*



**TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* "This fellow welcomes sinners and eats with them." This statement was meant to be negative, but how do you hear this as a good thing, a blessing?



**PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* Gracious God, thank you for welcoming sinners. Thank you for welcoming me. Amen.



**BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* You are a welcomed child of God.

APRIL

1

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** <sup>11</sup>Then Jesus said, "There was a man who had two sons. <sup>12</sup>The younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of the property that will belong to me.' So he divided his property between them. <sup>13</sup>A few days later the younger son gathered all he had and traveled to a distant country, and there he squandered his property in dissolute living. —Luke 15:11-13

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* Why would someone risk such fortune on something that is so uncertain? What risks do we take that threaten our relationship with God?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* God, even when we turn away from you, you are still there. Help us to appreciate and care for your gifts. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* God is with you always!

APRIL

2

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** <sup>14</sup>When he had spent everything, a severe famine took place throughout that country, and he began to be in need. <sup>15</sup>So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed the pigs. <sup>16</sup>He would gladly have filled himself with the pods that the pigs were eating; and no one gave him anything. <sup>17</sup>But when he came to himself he said, 'How many of my father's hired hands have bread enough and to spare, but here I am dying of hunger!' —Luke 15:14-17

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* Have you ever felt desperate, and separated from God? How do you know God is still with you?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* God, help us to know that nothing can separate us from your love in Christ Jesus. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* You belong to a loving God!

APRIL

3

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** <sup>18</sup>*I will get up and go to my father, and I will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; <sup>19</sup>I am no*

*longer worthy to be called your son; treat me like one of your hired hands."* -Luke 15:18-19

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* Asking for forgiveness can be so difficult that it might take some practice, but the reward for this courage is amazing. Have you ever had to ask for forgiveness? How did it feel?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* God, give us courage both to give and to receive forgiveness. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* You are a loved and forgiven child of God.

APRIL

4

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** <sup>20</sup>*So he set off and went to his father. But while he was still far off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion; he*

*ran and put his arms around him and kissed him. –Luke 15:20*

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* Nothing the son had done could keep his father from loving him. The father ran to his son while he was still far off and embraced him, even before the son could ask for forgiveness! What does it feel like to know that God loves and forgives you no matter how far you may feel from God?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* God, thank you for going ahead of us, even when we stray from your will for us. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* You are never too far off from God. May you feel God's arms of love around you.

APRIL

5

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** <sup>21</sup>*Then the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.'*

<sup>22</sup>*But the father said to his slaves, 'Quickly, bring out a robe - the best one - and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. <sup>23</sup>And get the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate; <sup>24</sup>for this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found!' And they began to celebrate. -Luke 15:21-24*

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* Have you ever received a gift that you felt you didn't deserve? This is grace!

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* Holy God, even when we don't deserve it, you give us the gifts of your kingdom. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* God has gifted you with the gifts of the kingdom.

APRIL

6

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** <sup>29</sup>*But [the elder son said], 'Listen! For all these years I have been working like a slave for you, and I have never disobeyed*

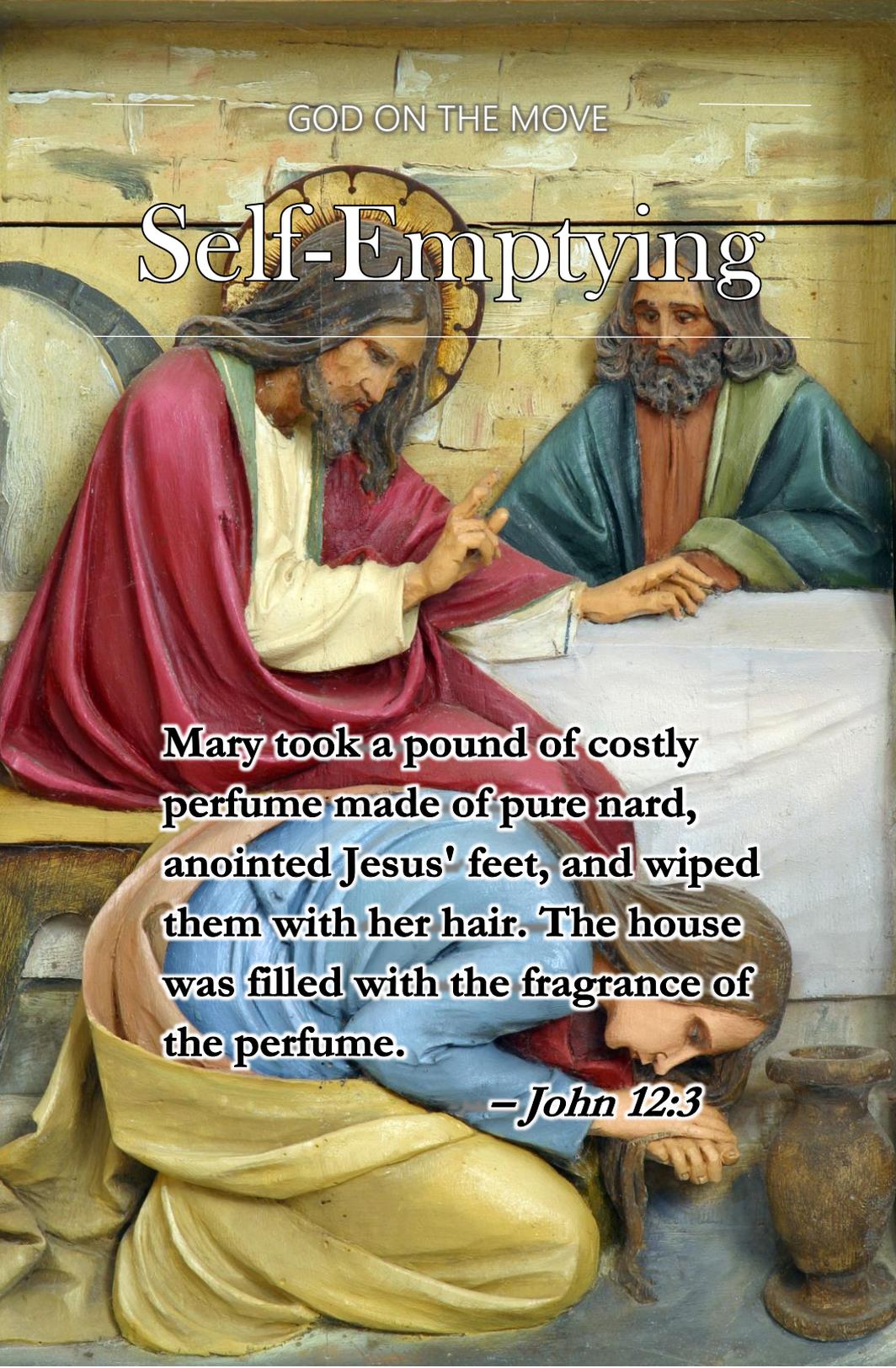
*your command; yet you have never given me even a young goat so that I might celebrate with my friends. <sup>30</sup>But when this son of yours came back, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fatted calf for him!' <sup>31</sup>Then the father said to him, 'Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. <sup>32</sup>But we had to celebrate and rejoice, because this brother of yours was dead and has come to life; he was lost and has been found.'"*

*-Luke 15:29-32*

 **TALK:** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* How does it feel when someone receives the same as you, but didn't work as hard as you for it?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* God, move us beyond resentment so that we may celebrate the gifts of grace with all your people. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* God's grace shines in you!



GOD ON THE MOVE

# Self-Emptying

**Mary took a pound of costly perfume made of pure nard, anointed Jesus' feet, and wiped them with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume.**

***— John 12:3***

# God Moves Us...

## *To Empty Ourselves*

Mary anointed Jesus with costly perfume, and Jesus identified the scent of the perfume both as the scent of sacrifice and of anointing for his own burial. Just as Mary made a costly sacrifice for Jesus, we are called to pour out ourselves for him. Smells can be overpowering, but the smell that overcomes all smells is Jesus' anointing for his death, when he empties himself for all and calls us to follow him.

Bible readings for the week: John 12:1-8; Philippians 2:4-11

APRIL

7



**SHARE** your highs and lows.



**READ** <sup>3</sup>*Mary took a pound of costly perfume made of pure nard, anointed Jesus' feet, and wiped them with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume. —John 12:3*



**TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* What are some of your favorite smells? What do they remind you of?



**PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* Gracious God, thank you for all of our senses. Use them and all we have for the good of others. Amen.



**BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* May the pleasant aroma of God's love fill you.

APRIL

8

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** <sup>4</sup>But Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples (the one who was about to betray him), said, <sup>5</sup>Why was this perfume not sold for

three hundred denarii and the money given to the poor? <sup>6</sup>(He said this not because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief; he kept the common purse and used to steal what was put into it.) -John 12:4-6

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* Even though Judas's true motives shine through his kind words, Jesus keeps him close as a disciple. How does Jesus' faithfulness feel to you in your own life?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* Jesus, thank you for always being faithful to us, even when our motives may betray you. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* May God's faithfulness fill your heart today.

APRIL

9

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** <sup>3</sup>Mary took a pound of costly perfume made of pure nard, anointed Jesus' feet, and wiped them with her hair. The house

was filled with the fragrance of the perfume...Jesus said, "Leave her alone. She bought it so that she might keep it for the day of my burial." -John 12:3, 7

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* What do you imagine that perfume smelled like? If sacrifice for another had a scent, what would it smell like? Jesus praises Mary for her actions. What actions would Jesus praise you for?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* God, strengthen us to value love more than anything else. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* May God's love fill every sense of your being.

APRIL

10

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** <sup>4</sup>*Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others.*

—Philippians 2:4

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* Where have you seen someone “empty themselves” today for the interest of others? How can you empty yourself for the interest of others?

 **PRAY** for one another’s highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* Jesus, thank you for emptying yourself for me. Help me to empty myself for others. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* Jesus loves you!

APRIL

11

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** <sup>5</sup>*Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, <sup>6</sup>who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with*

*God as something to be exploited, <sup>7</sup>but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, <sup>8</sup>he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death - even death on a cross. —Philippians 2:5-8*

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* Jesus emptied himself of all his “god-ness” in order to become human. What does that act of love mean to you, that Jesus would enter into all of our human struggles? What does it say about God?

 **PRAY** for one another’s highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* Jesus, thank you for becoming human to show me God’s love. Help me share this same love, even if it means sacrificing my comfort. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* Jesus’ love is poured out for you.

APRIL

12

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** <sup>9</sup>*Therefore God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, <sup>10</sup>so that at the name of Jesus*

*every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, <sup>11</sup>and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. –Philippians 2:9-11*

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* “Exalt” means to hold someone in very high regard. God exalted Jesus for emptying himself. How is self-emptying regarded today? How can you exalt self-emptying acts of love and service?

 **PRAY** for one another’s highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* Jesus, thank you for emptying yourself for me. Help me empty myself for the sake of others. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* God has exalted you, in the name of Jesus.

APRIL

13

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** <sup>3</sup>*Mary took a pound of costly perfume made of pure nard, anointed Jesus’ feet, and wiped them with her hair. The house*

*was filled with the fragrance of the perfume...Jesus said, “Leave her alone. She bought it so that she might keep it for the day of my burial.” –John 12:3, 7*

 **TALK:** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* Mary empties herself by pouring out the treasure she has saved and wiping Jesus’ feet with it. Jesus empties himself by pouring out his life for all. What sacrifice can you pour out this week for others?

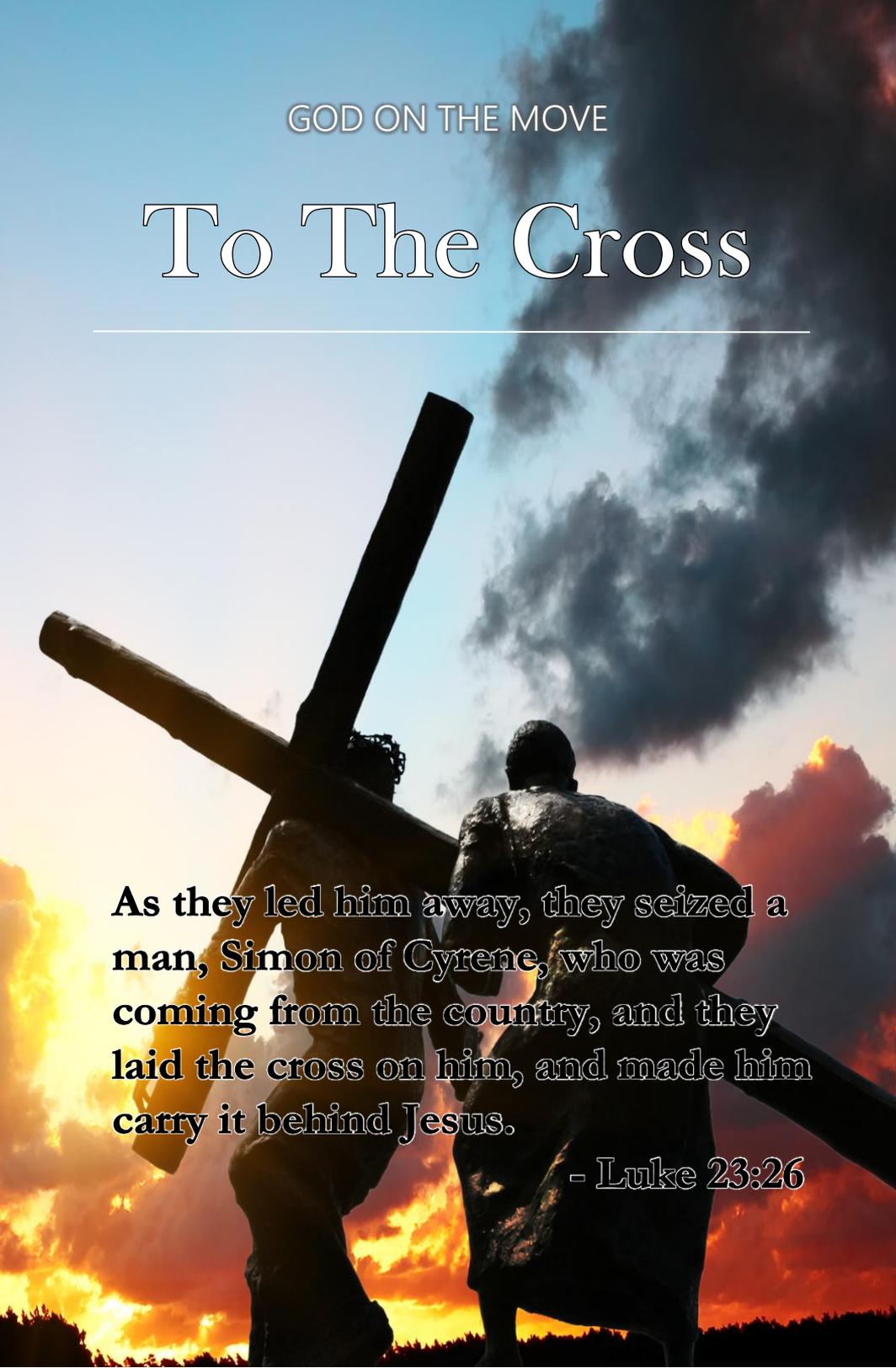
 **PRAY** for one another’s highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* Jesus, as you poured out your life for me, help me pour out a sacrifice for others. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* May God give you abundant life to share with others.

GOD ON THE MOVE

# To The Cross

---



As they led him away, they seized a man, Simon of Cyrene, who was coming from the country, and they laid the cross on him, and made him carry it behind Jesus.

- Luke 23:26

# God Moves...

## *To The Cross*

Holy Week. It's a paradox (two things that seem contradictory but end up being true) to think about the death of Jesus as such a holy event. But then, Jesus' entire life has been a paradox. How can an immortal God with no beginning and no end have a birth, a beginning of life? How does his father go looking for him and find him in his Father's house? How does the creator of the world and all things in it have no place to lay his head? Finally, how can an immortal God *die*?

The same paradox is found in the expectations of Jesus' royalty. A king with a crown of thorns, a cross for a throne, and a royal cupbearer who offers him sour wine? Yet, if God met our expectations, how small and powerless would the kingdom of God be? This week, defying all expectations, God moves to the cross, ensuring this kingdom ruled by love and forgiveness would never end.

Bible readings for the week: Luke 23:1-49

APRIL

14



**SHARE** your highs and lows.



**READ** <sup>26</sup>*As they led him away, they*

*seized a man, Simon of Cyrene, who was*

*coming from the country, and they laid the cross on him, and made him carry it behind Jesus. –Luke 23:26*



**TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* What do you think it would be like to carry the cross for Jesus?



**PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* Jesus, thank you for carrying the cross for me. Holy Spirit, give me the strength to take up my cross for others. Amen.



**BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* You are marked with the cross of Christ, and kept in his love forever.

APRIL

15

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** <sup>4</sup>*Then Pilate said o the chief priests and the crowds, "I find no basis for an accusation against this man...*

<sup>14</sup>*You brought me this man as one who was perverting the people; and here I have examined him in your presence and have not found this man guilty of any of your charges against him. <sup>15</sup>Neither has Herod, for he sent him back to us. Indeed, he has done nothing to deserve death...*

<sup>22</sup>*A third time he said to them, "Why, what evil has he done? I have found in him no ground for the sentence of death..."*

—Luke 23:4, 14-15, 22

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* Three times, Pilate declares Jesus' innocence while the crowds cry out, "Crucify him!" Why is Pilate the only one to declare Jesus innocent? Does my life, actions, and words, support Jesus?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* Jesus, thank you for continuing to believe in me, even when my life may not reflect my trust in you. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* You are a loved child of God.

APRIL

16

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** <sup>33</sup>*When they came to the place that is called The Skull, they crucified Jesus there with the criminals, one on his right and one*

*on his left. —Luke 23:33*

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* Why was Jesus crucified with criminals? What does this say about who is worthy of God's love?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* God, thank you for your grace, made known on the cross of Jesus. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* God's amazing grace is yours!

APRIL

17

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** <sup>34</sup>*Then Jesus said, "Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing." -Luke 23:34*

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* How amazing (or impossible) is it that Jesus was able to forgive those who crucified him, while he was on the cross? What does this mean for you?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* Jesus, thank you for your incredible forgiveness. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* You belong to a forgiving God.

APRIL

18

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** <sup>35</sup>*And the people stood by, watching; but the leaders scoffed at him, saying, "He saved others; let him save himself if he is the Messiah of God, the chosen one!" -Luke 23:35*

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* As the Son of God, do you think Jesus had the power to come down off the cross? If so, why do you think he didn't?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* Jesus, thank you for enduring the pain and humility of the cross. In my own pain and struggle, help me to remember you are there. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* You are blessed by the cross of Jesus.

APRIL

19

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** <sup>39</sup>*One of the criminals who were hanged there kept deriding him and saying, "Are you not the Messiah? Save yourself and*

*us!"* <sup>40</sup>*But the other rebuked him, saying, "Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation?"* <sup>41</sup>*And we indeed have been condemned justly, for we are getting what we deserve for our deeds, but this man has done nothing wrong."*

-Luke 23:39-41

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* Jesus was convicted and killed, yet he was innocent. How does that feel? What does it mean to you that he takes all of our guilt upon himself?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* Jesus, you were innocent, yet you died a criminal's death. Thank you for taking my guilt, and declaring me forgiven. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* God has forgiven you and made you whole.

APRIL

20

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** <sup>42</sup>*Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom."* <sup>43</sup>*He replied, "Truly I tell you, today you will be*

*with me in Paradise."* -Luke 23:42-43

 **TALK:** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* We will know God's kingdom fully either when we die or when Jesus comes again, but we can get glimpses of God's kingdom (paradise) even today. When have you experienced God's kingdom recently?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* Jesus, thank you for opening the kingdom of God for all people. Help us to be part of bringing your kingdom to earth. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* You belong to God's kingdom.

GOD ON THE MOVE

# Out of the Tomb



"Why do you look for the living  
among the dead? He is not here,  
but has risen."      – *Luke 24:5*

# God Moves

## ...*Out of the Tomb*

The women arrive at the tomb to anoint the dead body of Jesus, but instead they see a stone rolled away from the opening of the tomb and a world that has changed. Not even death can stop Jesus, who is God-on-the-move among us.

Bible readings for the week: Luke 24:1-53

APRIL

21



**SHARE** your highs and lows.



**READ** <sup>1</sup>*But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they came to the tomb, taking the spices that they had prepared.* <sup>2</sup>*They found the stone rolled away from the tomb,* <sup>3</sup>*but when they went in, they did not find the body.*

-*Luke 24:1-3*



**TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* What do you think are the first thoughts of the women when they find an empty tomb, and Jesus' body was gone? What would you think?



**PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* God of surprises, open our eyes to see the unexpected, your life where we expect sorrow. Amen.



**BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* May God breathe life into you today!

APRIL

22

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** <sup>4</sup>*While they were perplexed about this, suddenly two men in dazzling clothes stood beside them. <sup>5</sup>The women were terrified*

*and bowed their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, "Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen." –Luke 24:4-5*

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* “Why do you look for the living among the dead?” is one of the great questions of the Bible. Where have you been expecting only death or sorrow, but instead been surprised by the living Lord?

 **PRAY** for one another’s highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* Jesus, you are still living today. Bring us to life in surprising and unexpected ways. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* You have been blessed with the abundant life of Jesus.

APRIL

23

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** <sup>10</sup>*Now it was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the other women with them who told this to the*

*apostles. <sup>11</sup>But these words seemed to them an idle tale, and they did not believe them. –Luke 24:10-11*

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* The resurrection of Jesus is impossible to understand and make sense of. How do you struggle to understand? How does trusting in the resurrection make a difference in your life?

 **PRAY** for one another’s highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* Holy Spirit, give us the faith to see and know the life that you give us in the resurrection of Jesus. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* May the Holy Spirit bless you with faith that trusts in what cannot be proven.

APRIL

24

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** <sup>12</sup>*But Peter got up and ran to the tomb; stooping and looking in, he saw the linen cloths by themselves; then he went home,*

*amazed at what had happened. –Luke 24:12*

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* Peter was amazed, but he went home. What would you do with your amazement of the resurrection? What could you do tomorrow?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* God, amaze us with this story of resurrection in ways that we can't help but share it, both in what we say and in what we do. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* You belong to a living God.

APRIL

25

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** <sup>21</sup>*But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things took*

*place. <sup>22</sup>Moreover, some women of our group astounded us. They were at the tomb early this morning, <sup>23</sup>and when they did not find his body there, they came back and told us that they had indeed seen a vision of angels who said that he was alive. <sup>24</sup>Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said; but they did not see him. –Luke 24:21-24*

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* “But we had hoped...” These are common words of disappointment. When have you been disappointed? When have you still had hope in the unexpected?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* Jesus, though we do not always see you, open our hearts to know that you are alive and with us. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* May God move you to hope today.

APRIL

26

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** <sup>25</sup> *Then he said to them, "Oh, how foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared!*

<sup>26</sup> *Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and then enter into his glory?"* <sup>27</sup> *Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures. –Luke 24:25-27*

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* Why was it ‘necessary’ for Jesus to die? How has his death redeemed the ways we hurt others?

 **PRAY** for one another’s highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* Thank you God, for your Word that breaks our hearts open and moves us to life. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* God has moved you into life with his word of promise.

APRIL

27

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** <sup>30</sup> *When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. <sup>31</sup>Then their eyes were*

*opened, and they recognized him; and he vanished from their sight. <sup>32</sup>They said to each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?" –Luke 24:30-32*

 **TALK:** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* Where have you heard the same verbs as verse 30 (took, blessed, broke, gave)? How does receiving the broken body and poured out blood of Jesus in Holy Communion open your eyes to see the Risen Lord in the world?

 **PRAY** for one another’s highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* God, with your Word and Sacrament, open our eyes to see that you are on the move to meet us in the broken places of life. Amen.

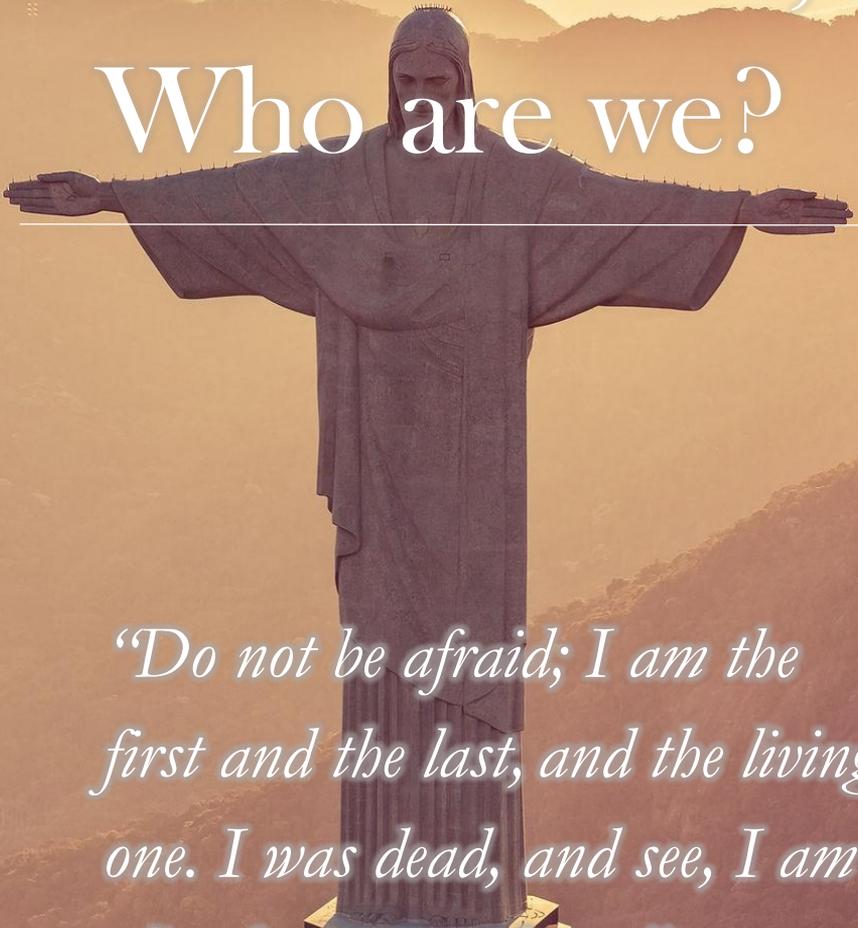
 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* May God bless you with eyes opened to see the Risen Lord Jesus.

THE REVELATION TO JOHN

# Who is Christ, Who are we?

*“Do not be afraid; I am the  
first and the last, and the living  
one. I was dead, and see, I am  
alive for ever and ever”*

*— Revelation 2:17-18*



# Who is Christ, Who are we? The Revelation to John

*We explore a message from a pastor to his congregation, offering hope through understanding who Christ is.*

What is Revelation about? What the end of the world will look like? Who will be punished and who will survive? This fascinating book is primarily about a pastor encouraging his congregations to trust that Jesus Christ is present amongst their church. This reading is the first of several letters to churches inviting steadfastness to the message passed along to them and to wait with anticipation for the hope promised to them.

Bible readings for the week: Psalm 150; Revelation 1:9-2:7

APRIL

28



**SHARE** your highs and lows.



**READ** <sup>9</sup> *I, John, your brother who share with you in Jesus the persecution and the kingdom and*

*the patient endurance, was on the island called Patmos because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus. <sup>10</sup>I was in the spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet <sup>11</sup>saying, 'Write in a book what you see and send it to the seven churches, to Ephesus, to Smyrna, to Pergamum, to Thyatira, to Sardis, to Philadelphia, and to Laodicea.'* –Revelation 1:9-11



**TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* What does “patient endurance” look like to you?



**PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* Loving God, thank you for this time in Revelation. Help us learn from this time. Amen.



**BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* God grant you patient endurance.

APRIL

29



**SHARE** your highs and lows.



**READ** <sup>12</sup> Then I turned to see whose voice it was that spoke to me, and on turning I saw seven golden lampstands, <sup>13</sup> and in the midst of the lampstands I saw

one like the Son of Man, clothed with a long robe and with a golden sash across his chest. <sup>14</sup> His head and his hair were white as white wool, white as snow; his eyes were like a flame of fire, <sup>15</sup> his feet were like burnished bronze, refined as in a furnace, and his voice was like the sound of many waters. <sup>16</sup> In his right hand he held seven stars, and from his mouth came a sharp, two-edged sword, and his face was like the sun shining with full force. —Revelation 1:12-16



**TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* What do you think of this description of the Son of Man?



**PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* God, thank you for the gift of the promises in Revelation. Help us be faithful. Amen.



**BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* God's love is with you today.

APRIL

30



**SHARE** your highs and lows.



**READ** <sup>17</sup> When I saw him (see verses 12-16), I fell at his feet as though dead. But he placed his right hand on me, saying, 'Do not be afraid; I am the first and the

last, <sup>18</sup> and the living one. I was dead, and see, I am alive for ever and ever; and I have the keys of Death and of Hades. <sup>19</sup> Now write what you have seen, what is, and what is to take place after this. <sup>20</sup> As for the mystery of the seven stars that you saw in my right hand, and the seven golden lampstands: the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven churches. —Revelation 1:17-20



**TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* Why might the idea that the Son of Man is the first and the last (Alpha and Omega) be important?



**PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* God, we trust in your message given to us. Guide and bless us. Amen.



**BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* God is first and last, Alpha and Omega, for YOU!

MAY

1

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** *'To the angel of the church in Ephesus write: These are the words of him who holds the seven stars in his right hand, who walks among the seven*

*golden lampstands: <sup>2</sup>I know your works, your toil and your patient endurance. I know that you cannot tolerate evildoers; you have tested those who claim to be apostles but are not, and have found them to be false. <sup>3</sup>I also know that you are enduring patiently and bearing up for the sake of my name, and that you have not grown weary.*

– Revelation 2:1-3

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* What are you called to endure patiently and bear up for the sake of your faith?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* Jesus, help us follow you faithfully and walk in the ways you guide us. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* You belong to a gracious God.

MAY

2

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** *<sup>4</sup>But I have this against you, that you have abandoned the love you had at first. <sup>5</sup>Remember then from what you have fallen; repent, and do the works you did at first. If not, I will come to you and remove*

*your lampstand from its place, unless you repent. <sup>6</sup>Yet this is to your credit: you hate the works of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate. <sup>7</sup>Let anyone who has an ear listen to what the Spirit is saying to the churches. To everyone who conquers, I will give permission to eat from the tree of life that is in the paradise of God. –Revelation 2:4-7*

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* The church at Ephesus is warned because they abandoned love. What makes it hard to love sometimes?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* Loving God, help us be the love you have first given us. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* You are God's beloved child.

MAY

3

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** <sup>1</sup> *Praise the Lord!*

*Praise God in his sanctuary;*

*praise him in his mighty firmament!*

<sup>2</sup> *Praise him for his mighty deeds;*

*praise him according to his surpassing greatness!*

–Psalm 150:1-2

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* What do you offer praise to God most for?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* God, we give thanks for the reminder today to offer praise and thanksgiving for all we have received. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* You are God's beautiful creation.

MAY

4

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** <sup>3</sup> *Praise him with trumpet sound;*

*praise him with lute and harp!*

<sup>4</sup> *Praise him with tambourine and dance;*

*praise him with strings and pipe!*

<sup>5</sup> *Praise him with clanging cymbals;*

*praise him with loud clashing cymbals!*

<sup>6</sup> *Let everything that breathes praise the Lord!*

*Praise the Lord! –Psalm 150:3-6*

 **TALK:** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* How do you offer praise to God?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* We are blessed to offer you praise, God. Thank you for all you have first given us. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* Jesus loves you and so do I.

THE REVELATION TO JOHN

# Casting Down Their Crowns

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“You are worthy, our Lord  
and God, to receive glory  
and honor and power,  
for you created all things,  
and by your will they  
existed and were created.”

— *Revelation 4:11*

# Casting Down Their Crowns – Worship and God’s New Creation

*We glimpse the heavenly throne room that introduces us to God the creator.*

We often imagine Revelation primarily as a book of destruction with ‘doom and gloom’ theology. While the imagery is very vivid in this book the theme is better placed around God as creator. Specifically God as creator of a new creation. We may know well the hymns that are inspired by these verses that recall God’s holiness inviting the people into worship around the throne.

Bible readings for the week: Psalm 30; Revelation 4:1-11

MAY

5



**SHARE** your highs and lows.



**READ** <sup>1</sup>After this I looked, and there in heaven a door stood open! And the first voice, which I had heard speaking to me like a trumpet, said, ‘Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this.’ <sup>2</sup>At once I was in the spirit, and there in heaven stood a throne, with one seated on the throne! <sup>3</sup>And the one seated there looks like jasper and cornelian, and around the throne is a rainbow that looks like an emerald. –Revelation 4:1-3



**TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* This begins quite the image. How do you feel about how the throne room is introduced?



**PRAY** for one another’s highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* Gracious God, thank you for these images that introduce us to wonder, awe, and so much beyond ourselves. Amen.



**BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* The one seated on the throne loves you.

MAY

6

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** <sup>4</sup>*Around the throne are twenty-four thrones, and seated on the thrones are twenty-four*

*elders, dressed in white robes, with golden crowns on their heads. <sup>5</sup>Coming from the throne are flashes of lightning, and rumblings and peals of thunder, and in front of the throne burn seven flaming torches, which are the seven spirits of God; <sup>6</sup>and in front of the throne there is something like a sea of glass, like crystal. –Revelation 4:4-6*

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* What is the most interesting part to you about this description?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* Jesus, with awe and wonder we give you thanks and offer our gratitude. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* God watches over you.

MAY

7

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** <sup>6b</sup>*Around the throne, and on each side of the throne, are four living creatures, full of eyes in front and behind: <sup>7</sup>the first living creature like a*

*lion, the second living creature like an ox, the third living creature with a face like a human face, and the fourth living creature like a flying eagle. <sup>8</sup>And the four living creatures, each of them with six wings, are full of eyes all around and inside. Day and night without ceasing they sing, 'Holy, holy, holy, the Lord God the Almighty, who was and is and is to come.' – Revelation 4:6b-8*

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* Talk about the creatures or Google what they represent (which Gospel does each associate with)?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* Creator, we praise you as the one who was and is and is to come. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* You are loved and appreciated.

MAY

8

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** <sup>9</sup>*And whenever the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to the one who is seated on the throne, who lives for ever and*

*ever, <sup>10</sup>the twenty-four elders fall before the one who is seated on the throne and worship the one who lives for ever and ever; they cast their crowns before the throne, singing,*

*<sup>11</sup> ‘You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created.’ –Revelation 4:9-11*

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* What do you give thanks to God for the most?

 **PRAY** for one another’s highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor. Thank you. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* You are God’s beautiful creation.

MAY

9

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** <sup>4</sup>*Sing praises to the LORD, O you his faithful ones, and give thanks to his holy name.*

*<sup>5</sup> For his anger is but for a moment; his favor is for a lifetime. Weeping may linger for the night, but joy comes with the morning. <sup>6</sup> As for me, I said in my prosperity, ‘I shall never be moved.’ <sup>7</sup> By your favor, O LORD, you had established me as a strong mountain; you hid your face; I was dismayed.–Psalm 30:4-7*

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* Do you have a story of weeping that turned to joy ‘in the morning’?

 **PRAY** for one another’s highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* God, thank you for the favor and love we know in Jesus. Thank you for turning our weeping to joy. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* God’s favor is with you.

MAY  
10

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** <sup>8</sup> *To you, O LORD, I cried,  
and to the LORD I made supplication:*

<sup>9</sup> *'What profit is there in my death,  
if I go down to the Pit?*

*Will the dust praise you?*

*Will it tell of your faithfulness?*

<sup>10</sup> *Hear, O LORD, and be gracious to me!*

*O LORD, be my helper!' –Psalm 30:8-10*

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* God's creation is beautiful and gracious. Do you ever wonder why God is 'mindful' of humans?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* Holy God, we pray to live into our status as your glorious creation. We are so grateful for all the beauty around us. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* God has crowned you with glory and honor.

MAY  
11

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** <sup>11</sup> *You have turned my mourning into  
dancing;*

*you have taken off my sackcloth  
and clothed me with joy,*

<sup>12</sup> *so that my soul may praise you and not be silent.*

*O LORD my God, I will give thanks to you for  
ever. –Psalm 30:11-12*

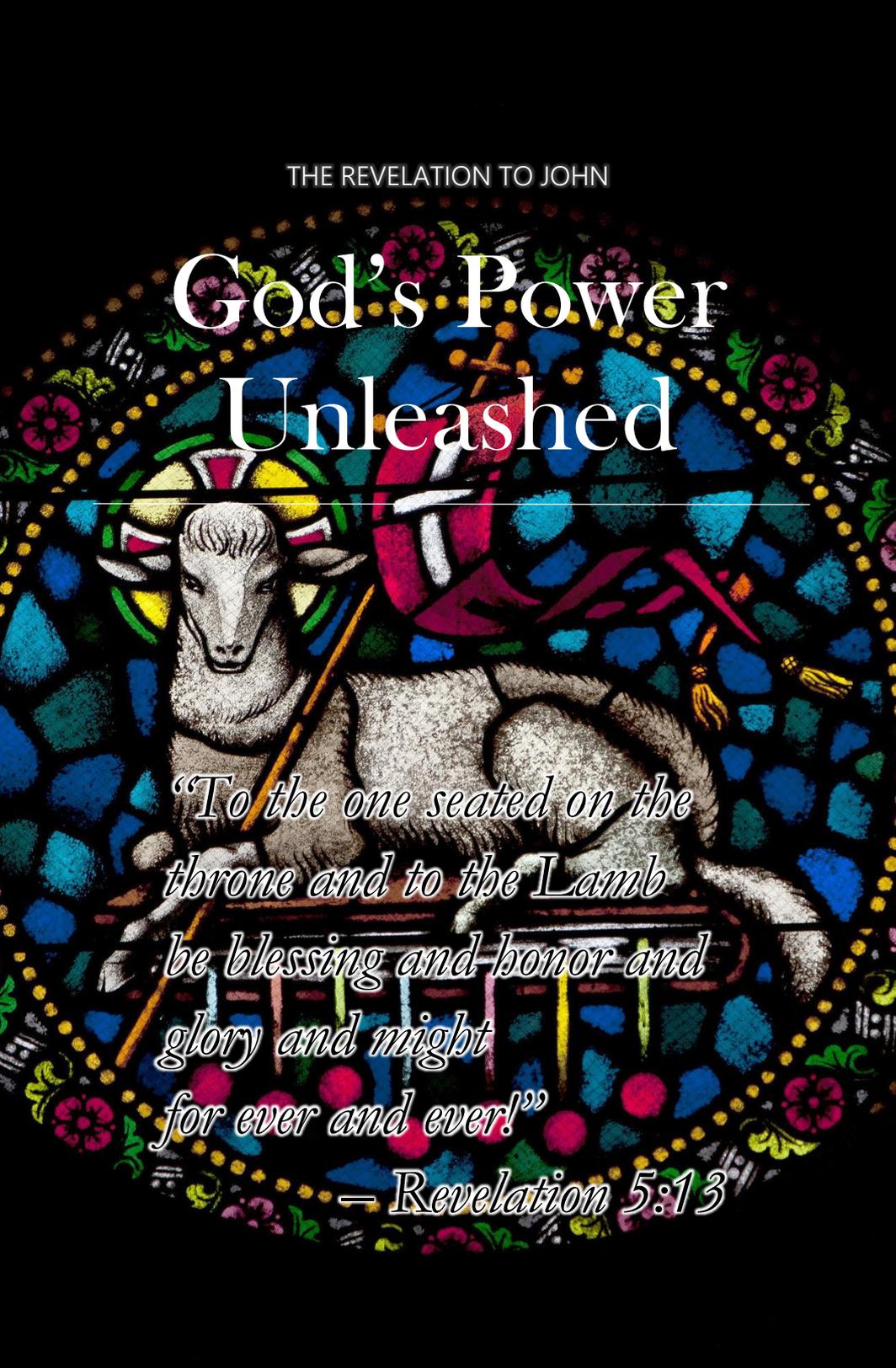
 **TALK:** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* What is it this day that you would praise God for?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* Our souls praise you, God, and we pray for the strength to share your mercy and love. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* The joy of the Lord be your strength.

THE REVELATION TO JOHN

# God's Power Unleashed



*“To the one seated on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might for ever and ever!”*

*— Revelation 5:13*

# God's Power Unleashed through the Crucified Lamb

*The heavenly vision of the throne room continues as God's will is made known through the self-sacrifice of the lamb.*

How is the kingdom of God built? The model given in this week's vision is through self-sacrificial love. God's will is represented by the scroll and as its seal is broken open we see a heavenly throne room with the Lamb at its center with four creatures and twenty-four elders falling down in worship. Following, we hear the promise of God's love for all as we read of the angels and 'myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands' singing with full voice and joining in worship. The Lamb brings salvation for the saints from every tribe and language.

Bible readings for the week: Psalm 23; Revelation 5:1-13



**SHARE** your highs and lows.

MAY

12



**READ** <sup>1</sup>*Then I saw in the right hand of the one seated on the throne a scroll written on the inside and on the back, sealed with seven seals;* <sup>2</sup>*and I*

*saw a mighty angel proclaiming with a loud voice, 'Who is worthy to open the scroll and break its seals?'* <sup>3</sup>*And no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll or to look into it.* <sup>4</sup>*And I began to weep bitterly because no one was found worthy to open the scroll or to look into it.* <sup>5</sup>*Then one of the elders said to me, 'Do not weep. See, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has conquered, so that he can open the scroll and its seven seals.'* —Revelation 5:1-5



**TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* The text talks about worthiness. When do you feel the most worthy? How about the least?



**PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* Jesus, thank you for making us worthy and blessing us. Amen.



**BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* God loves you.

MAY

13

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** *<sup>6</sup>Then I saw between the throne and the four living creatures and among the elders a Lamb standing as if it had been slaughtered, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth. <sup>7</sup>He went and took the scroll from the right hand of the one who was seated on the throne. <sup>8</sup>When he had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell before the Lamb, each holding a harp and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. –Revelation 5:6-8*

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* What are the prayers you offer to God today as a beloved saint?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* God, thank you for the Lamb who is worthy to worship. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* You are an important saint of God.

MAY

14

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** *<sup>8</sup>When he had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell before the Lamb, each holding a harp and golden*

*bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. <sup>9</sup>They sing a new song: 'You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slaughtered and by your blood you ransomed for God saints from every tribe and language and people and nation; <sup>10</sup>you have made them to be a kingdom and priests serving our God, and they will reign on earth.' – Revelation 5:8-10*

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* What does it mean to you to be 'a kingdom and priests serving our God'?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* God, thank you for your inclusive gift for every tribe and language and people and nation. Help us live this gift for the world. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* You are called and loved!

MAY  
15

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** <sup>11</sup>*Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels surrounding the throne and the living creatures and the elders; they numbered myriads of*

*myriads and thousands of thousands, <sup>12</sup>singing with full voice, 'Worthy is the Lamb that was slaughtered to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing!'*

<sup>13</sup>*Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea, and all that is in them, singing, 'To the one seated on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might for ever and ever!'* –Revelation 5:11-13

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* How does your imagination lead you to think this worship sounds and looks like?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* God, you are worthy of our praise and thanksgiving. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* You are redeemed by the Lamb.

MAY  
16

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** <sup>1</sup>*The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want.*

<sup>2</sup>*He makes me lie down in green pastures; he leads me beside still waters;*

<sup>3</sup>*he restores my soul.*

*He leads me in right paths*

*for his name's sake. –Psalm 23:1-3*

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* Being content (not wanting) is difficult. What helps you do this?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* Lord, lead us in right paths, according to your will. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* God bless you and restore your soul.

MAY  
17

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** <sup>4</sup> *Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I fear no evil; for you are with me; your rod and your staff— they comfort me. —Psalm 23:4*

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* Do you have a story of a ‘dark valley’ and of God’s presence with you?

 **PRAY** for one another’s highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* Holy God, remind us of your presence always and give us your comfort. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* May God comfort you today.

MAY  
18

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** <sup>5</sup> *You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.*

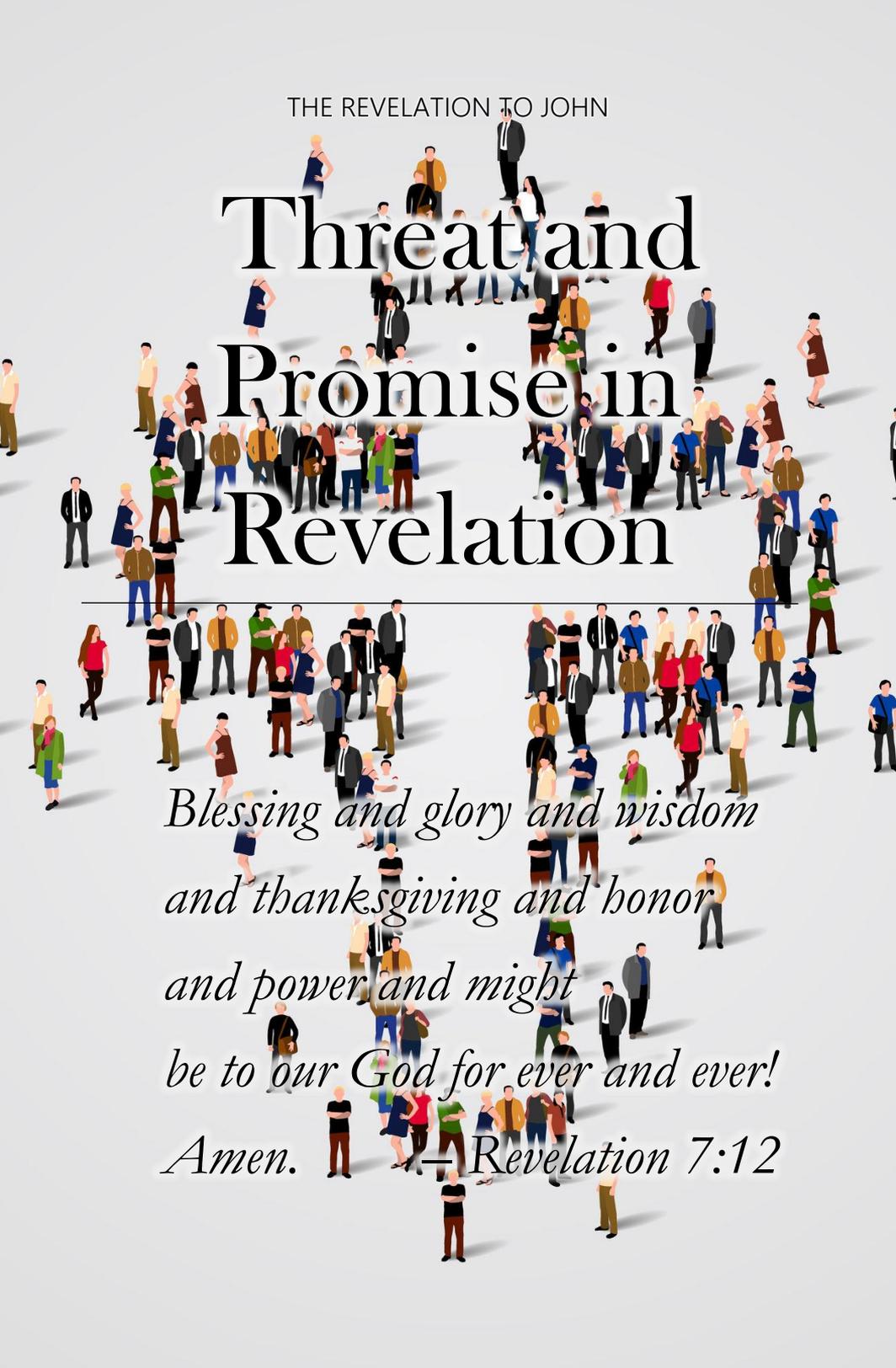
<sup>6</sup> *Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD my whole life long. —Psalm 23:5-6*

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* Do you see yourself as having enemies? How does your faith in God help you with this?

 **PRAY** for one another’s highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* Loving Spirit of Christ, thank you for all of the goodness and mercy you have shown all the days of my life. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* Goodness and mercy follow you all the days of your life!

THE REVELATION TO JOHN



# Threat and Promise in Revelation

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*Blessing and glory and wisdom  
and thanksgiving and honor  
and power and might  
be to our God for ever and ever!  
Amen. — Revelation 7:12*

## Threat and Promise in Revelation

*The Seven Seals are opened and we hear of threatening visions. We also hear the promise, knowing this is God's final word.*

The congregation "Pastor John" is writing to receive a word that they need to cling to and trust God. They cling too strongly to their own power and economic stability. The visions presented as the seven seals open up show their vulnerabilities and how they are not able to get away from threats and uncertainty. In Revelation, those who stand firm are those who trust in the Lamb. This redemption doesn't make problems go away, but gives them the strength and hope needed to lean into God's goodness.

Bible readings for the week: Psalm 148; Revelation 6:1-8; 7:9-17



**SHARE** your highs and lows.

MAY  
19



**READ** <sup>9</sup>After this I looked, and there was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb,

*robed in white, with palm branches in their hands. <sup>10</sup>They cried out in a loud voice, saying, 'Salvation belongs to our God who is seated on the throne, and to the Lamb!' <sup>11</sup>And all the angels stood around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures, and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshipped God, <sup>12</sup>singing, 'Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God for ever and ever! Amen.'* –Revelation 7:9-12



**TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* What is the largest group you have been a part of? What was it like?



**PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* Gracious God, we are excited to be a part of the multitude from every nation offering our praise. Thank you for this gift. Amen.



**BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* You belong to God.

MAY

20



**SHARE** your highs and lows.



**READ** Revelation 7:9-12 from May 19.



**TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* Why

does salvation rightly belong to God?



**PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* Jesus, grant us your wisdom and guide us each of our days. Amen.



**BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* May the Spirit guide you and bless you.

MAY

21



**SHARE** your highs and lows.



**READ** Revelation 7:9-12 from May 19.



**TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* Do

you have a favorite memory of a worship experience?



**PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* God, as we worship we grow closer to you. Lead us to the places that nourish us. Amen.



**BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* Jesus bless your worship and praise!

MAY

22

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** <sup>13</sup>Then one of the elders addressed me, saying, 'Who are these, robed in white, and where have they come from?' <sup>14</sup>I said to him, 'Sir, you are

the one that knows.' Then he said to me, 'These are they who have come out of the great ordeal; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. <sup>15</sup> For this reason they are before the throne of God, and worship him day and night within his temple, and the one who is seated on the throne will shelter them. <sup>16</sup> They will hunger no more, and thirst no more; the sun will not strike them, nor any scorching heat; <sup>17</sup> for the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd, and he will guide them to springs of the water of life, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.' —Revelation 7:13-17

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* What do you think the text might mean by 'the great ordeal'?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* Holy Spirit, we ask for your presence with us each of our days, especially when we face challenges. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* God holds you close in hard times.

MAY

23

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** Revelation 7:13-17 from May 22.

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation*

*prompt:* What is most life-giving to you right now?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* Jesus, guide us to the life-giving springs as we pray to feel your presence. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* You are loved by Jesus.

MAY  
24

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** <sup>1</sup> *Praise the LORD! Praise the LORD from the heavens; praise him in the heights!* <sup>2</sup> *Praise him, all his angels; praise him, all his host!*

<sup>3</sup> *Praise him, sun and moon; praise him, all you shining stars!*

<sup>4</sup> *Praise him, you highest heavens, and you waters above the heavens!*

<sup>5</sup> *Let them praise the name of the LORD, for he commanded and they were created.* <sup>6</sup> *He established them for ever and ever; he fixed their bounds, which cannot be passed. –Psalm 148:1-6*

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* The whole creation is called to praise the Lord. What are you thankful for today?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* Holy God, we thank you for the wonderful creation. We are so thankful to have it to enjoy. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* Join all of creation in giving praise.

MAY  
25

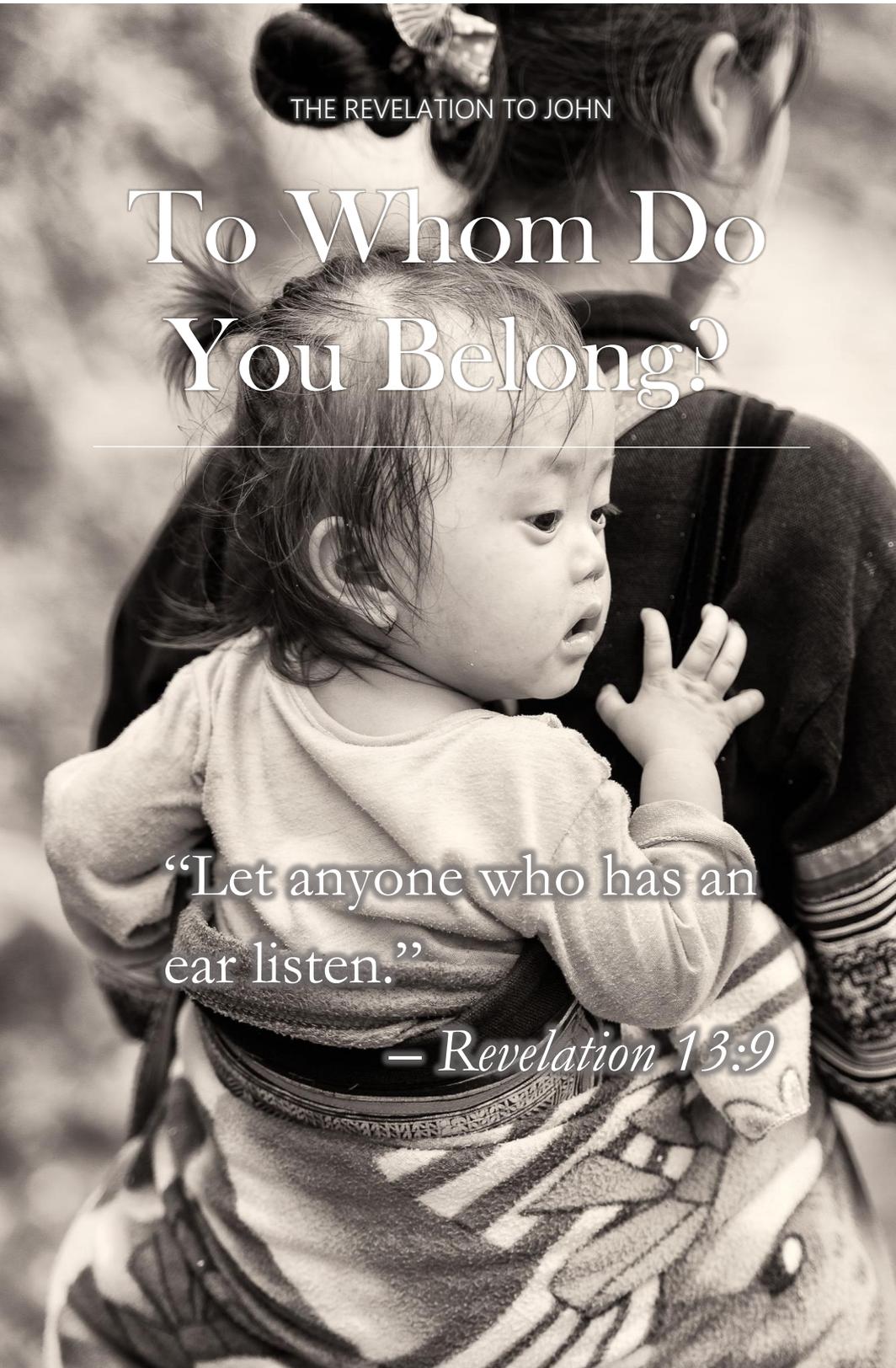
 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** Psalm 148:1-6 from May 24.

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* What could you do today to offer praise and thanksgiving to God?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* God, guide us as we live in harmony with your creation. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* Jesus is with you and loves you.



THE REVELATION TO JOHN

# To Whom Do You Belong?

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“Let anyone who has an  
ear listen.”

– *Revelation 13:9*

## To Whom Do You Belong?

*Our faith identity comes from the 'King of kings and Lord of lords', but there are many things that seek to claim our allegiance.*

The imagery in this text from Revelation continues to be vivid and violent. Chapter 13 introduced us to two beasts that demand allegiance, challenging loyalty of the congregation. In chapter 17 the culture they live in is described as a harlot riding on the beast. Violence is central, but their materialism is also challenged. Chapter 19 introduces a different rider named Faithful and True. This rider overcomes the beast with the power of the Word as 'King of kings and Lord of lords'.

Bible readings for the week: Psalm 97; Revelation 17:1-6; 19:11-16



**SHARE** your highs and lows.

MAY

26



**READ** <sup>1</sup>*Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and said to me, 'Come, I will show you the judgement of the great whore who is seated on many waters, <sup>2</sup>with whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and with the wine of whose fornication the inhabitants of the earth have become drunk.'* –Revelation 17:1-2



**TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* The language here is fairly hard to grasp. You may want to read more of the chapter for context. However, do you ever feel like things are going the wrong direction?



**PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* God, grant us honesty and the ability to listen when you speak. Amen.



**BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* You belong to Christ.

MAY

27

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** <sup>3</sup>*So he carried me away in the spirit into a wilderness, and I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast that was full of blasphemous names, and it had seven*

*heads and ten horns.* <sup>4</sup>*The woman was clothed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and jewels and pearls, holding in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and the impurities of her fornication;* <sup>5</sup>*and on her forehead was written a name, a mystery: 'Babylon the great, mother of whores and of earth's abominations.'* <sup>6</sup>*And I saw that the woman was drunk with the blood of the saints and the blood of the witnesses to Jesus. When I saw her, I was greatly amazed.* – Revelation 17:3-6

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* We read today of sins of materialism and misuse. What do you notice in this text? What might you pray for in the world where there is pain?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* God, help us be faithful stewards of all you have given to us. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* God grant you wisdom and patience.

MAY

28

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** <sup>11</sup>*Then I saw heaven opened, and there was a white horse! Its rider is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war.* <sup>12</sup>*His eyes are*

*like a flame of fire, and on his head are many diadems; and he has a name inscribed that no one knows but himself.* <sup>13</sup>*He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood, and his name is called The Word of God.* –Revelation 19:11-13

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* Where do you see faithfulness and truth in the world?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* Lord, keep our eyes fixed on your words of truth. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* Jesus loves you and so do I!

MAY  
29

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** <sup>13</sup>*He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood, and his name is called The Word of God.* <sup>14</sup>*And the armies of heaven, wearing fine linen, white and*

*pure, were following him on white horses.* <sup>15</sup>*From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron; he will tread the wine press of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty.* <sup>16</sup>*On his robe and on his thigh he has a name inscribed, 'King of kings and Lord of lords'.*  
—Revelation 19:13-16

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* Do you have trouble seeing God as a king? Why or why not?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* Lord Jesus, we are grateful to call you king and lord, the one who watches over us. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* God is with you.

MAY  
30

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** <sup>6</sup>*The heavens proclaim his righteousness; and all the peoples behold his glory.* <sup>7</sup>*All worshippers of images are put to shame,*

*those who make their boast in worthless idols; all gods bow down before him.* —Psalm 97:6-7

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* What are some of the things that we put before God in our lives that we shouldn't?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* Jesus, we ask for help to give you thanks and to not put things before you and those we love. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* May God's spirit guide and support you.

MAY

31

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** <sup>8</sup> *Zion hears and is glad, and the towns of Judah rejoice, because of your judgements, O God.* <sup>9</sup> *For you, O LORD, are most high over all the earth; you are exalted far above all gods.*

—Psalm 97:8-9

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* When is it ok for God's judgment to be present with us?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* God, we thank you for today and thank you for supporting us. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* Rejoice! You are loved.

JUNE

1

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** <sup>10</sup> *The LORD loves those who hate evil; he guards the lives of his faithful; he rescues them from the hand of the wicked.* <sup>11</sup> *Light dawns for the*

*righteous, and joy for the upright in heart.* <sup>12</sup> *Rejoice in the LORD, O you righteous, and give thanks to his holy name!*

—Psalm 97:10-12

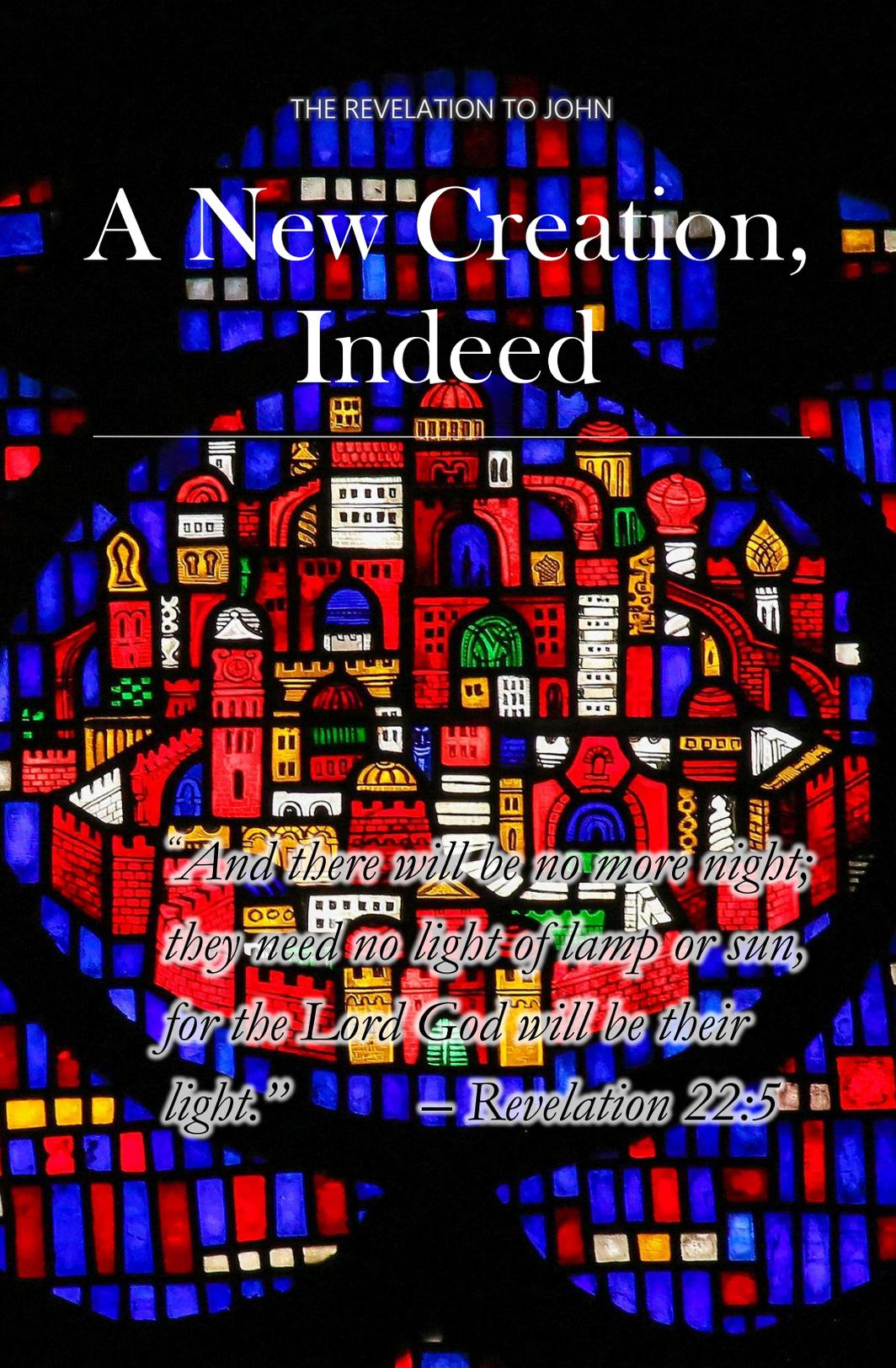
 **TALK:** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* What phrase sticks out to you from the reading today?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* Spirit, we pray to be found upright in heart. Keep us following Jesus always. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* The hand of God is your guide.

THE REVELATION TO JOHN

# A New Creation, Indeed



*“And there will be no more night;  
they need no light of lamp or sun,  
for the Lord God will be their  
light.”* — Revelation 22:5

## A New Creation, Indeed

*The final act of God in Revelation is the new creation. The forces of evil have been defeated and God declares, "I make all things new."*

The final image is offered in Revelation is that of the new creation. The forces of evil have been defeated and we are surprised to see that the end is not destruction but rather the promise of a new creation. God dwells with the people as they experience the rivers that give life and the tree of life that offers healing. In conclusion, the people ask how to now live in the midst of such a promise.

Bible readings for the week: Psalm 104; Revelation 21:1-6; 22:1-5

JUNE

2



**SHARE** your highs and lows.



**READ** <sup>1</sup>*Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more.* <sup>2</sup>*And I saw*

*the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.*

—Revelation 21:1-2



**TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* What do you think that heaven is like?



**PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* God, thank you for Revelation and for this promise we are a part of. Amen.



**BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* You belong to God.

JUNE

3

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** <sup>3</sup>*And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, 'See, the home of God is among mortals. He will dwell with them; they will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them; <sup>4</sup>he will wipe every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; mourning and crying and pain will be no more, for the first things have passed away.'* –Revelation 21:3-4

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* Where would you like to see pain wiped out in the world?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* Healing God, be with us as we journey through this life, and in the end bring us to you. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* God is with you.

JUNE

4

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** <sup>5</sup>*And the one who was seated on the throne said, 'See, I am making all things new.'* Also he said, *'Write this, for these words are trustworthy and true.'* <sup>6</sup>*Then he said to me, 'It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give water as a gift from the spring of the water of life.'* –Revelation 21:5-6

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* Why does something/someone being trustworthy matter so much?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* Jesus, we are thirsty for your grace. Grant us this gift always. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* You are loved by the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end!

JUNE

5

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** <sup>1</sup>*Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb* <sup>2</sup>*through the middle*

*of the street of the city. On either side of the river is the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, producing its fruit each month; and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations.*

—Revelation 22:1-2

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* Where do you see new life in the world today?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* Gracious Spirit, hear us calling to you for joy and abundant life. Give us your presence. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* You belong to the creator, the river of life.

JUNE

6

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** <sup>1</sup>*Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb* <sup>2</sup>*through the middle*

*of the street of the city. On either side of the river is the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, producing its fruit each month; and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations.*

—Revelation 22:1-2

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* Where would you pray for the healing of the nations?

 **PRAY** for one another's highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* Healing savior, we pray for everywhere there is need and for your name to me known. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* God's healing presence is with you.

JUNE

7

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** <sup>3</sup>*Nothing accursed will be found there any more. But the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship*

*him; <sup>4</sup>they will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. <sup>5</sup>And there will be no more night; they need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign for ever and ever. –Revelation 22:3-5*

 **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* This is a beautiful promise. Where does the world need more “light” today?

 **PRAY** for one another’s highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* Holy God, we worship you and thank you for this promise that invites us to trust in you. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* God is your light and your guide.

JUNE

8

 **SHARE** your highs and lows.

 **READ** <sup>3</sup>*Nothing accursed will be found there any more. But the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him; <sup>4</sup>they will see*

*his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. <sup>5</sup>And there will be no more night; they need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign for ever and ever.*

–Revelation 22:3-5

 **TALK:** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. *Conversation prompt:* What ways do you offer praise and worship to God?

 **PRAY** for one another’s highs and lows. You may begin or end with the *prayer prompt:* Loving Trinity, be our light and our hope as we journey through this life. Amen.

 **BLESS** one another. *Blessing prompt:* God bless you and keep you!