

AUGUST 25, 2024
FOURTEENTH SUNDAY
AFTER PENTECOST

taking†
faith
home

The gospel message gives us a courageous heart.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

These passages are related to the Lectionary texts for this Sunday.

Sunday	John 6:56-69	Many disciples desert Jesus
Monday	Joshua 24:1-2a, 14-18	Many tribes renew the covenant
Tuesday	Ephesians 6:10-20	The whole armor of God
Wednesday	1 Corinthians 2:1-13	The true wisdom of God
Thursday	1 Chronicles 28:20-21	Solomon and the temple plans
Friday	2 Timothy 1:3-7	Rekindle the gift of God
Saturday	Psalms 34:15-22	The Lord is with you
Sunday	Mark 7:1-8, 14-15, 21-23	Authentic faith

SCRIPTURE VERSE FOR THIS WEEK

Pray also for me, so that when I speak, a message may be given to me to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains. Ephesians 6:19-20a (NRSV)

PRAYERS AND BLESSING

A Prayer for the Week:

Almighty God, give us courage to speak and live the faith with boldness and to encourage others with your love and mercy through Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.

Mealtime Prayer:

Dear God, we thank you for this meal that strengthens our body and encourages us in a life of faith through Jesus Christ, the bread of life. Amen.

A Blessing to Give:

May you be made strong and courageous through Jesus Christ.



AUGUST 25, 2024
HYMN OF THE WEEK

Lord of All Hopefulness

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WEEKLY MILESTONES

Take a moment to tell or think about a recent mountain high and/or valley low in your life.

CARING CONVERSATIONS

Discuss in your home, small group, or use for personal reflections:

- When something bad happens, where do you turn for comfort?
- Do you feel comforted by God's power when you have experienced difficult times? Explain.

DEVOTIONS

Read: Ephesians 6:10-20.

The language that fills this passage can be uncomfortable. It may seem to convey acts of violence against those who oppose God. However, the focus is on a defensive posture for Christians. These are not tools to attack people but to protect people from evil that assaults the community that follows Jesus. This passage acknowledges that evil power is real, and we do need protection, including the sword of the Spirit. Ephesians 1 begins by announcing God's victory in Christ. The battle is won, but the powers dedicated to oppose God have not gone away. In verses 19 and 20 the author describes being imprisoned in chains but not defeated. The boldness of the author is grounded not in arrogance or one's own power, but in the "mystery of the gospel" (v. 19) that continues to do battle with the present evil age. When it reads "be strong" (v. 10), the Greek means to be made strong through the power of God, not one's own strength to defeat others.

Discuss: How does the Christian faith give you strength during difficult times?

Pray: **God of power and might, help us to face the hurts and pains of this life with hope and faith that reaches out to others with your love through Christ Jesus our Savior and Lord. Amen.**

SERVICE

Jesus calls us to serve our neighbor in love. Based on the Daily Bible Readings and theme for this week, how can you help someone who is going through a tough time?

RITUALS AND TRADITIONS

In Joshua 24:15b, Joshua speaks for his entire household and says to the people, "[A]s for me and my household, we will serve the LORD." Many Christians display this verse somewhere in their homes. It is a testimony to faith in God. Think or talk about what it means for your household to "serve the LORD." Write and complete this sentence, "In my household, I will serve the Lord by...."

Pray: **Lord God, help us to be reminded daily of your unending faithfulness to us and serve you always. Amen.**

