



28 FEB

2nd SUNDAY OF LENT

SCRIPTURE MEDITATION **1-6 Mar**

March 2021

GOD 'S HOUSE



READ

Therefore, holy brothers and sisters, who share in the heavenly calling, fix your thoughts on Jesus, whom we acknowledge as our apostle and high priest. He was faithful to the one who appointed him, just as Moses was faithful in all God's house. Jesus has been found worthy of greater honor than Moses, just as the builder of a house has greater honor than the house itself. For every house is built by someone, but God is the builder of everything. "Moses was faithful as a servant in all God's house," bearing witness to what would be spoken by God in the future. But Christ is faithful as the Son over God's house. And we are his house, if indeed we hold firmly to our confidence and the hope in which we glory. (Hebrews 3:1-6)

REFLECT

Houses do all kinds of things. They shelter us from the elements, keep us safe, and provide the backdrop for a lifetime of memories, just to name a few. But houses are more than buildings where people live. "House" can also be a metaphor for the people who live there. In that way, "house" really becomes "family." For instance, Luke described Mary and Joseph going to Bethlehem because they "belonged to the house and line of David" (Luke 2:4)

Here are a few truths about those of us who belong to the house and line of Jesus:

- ❖ We are brothers and sisters, a holy relationship
- ❖ We share a heavenly calling
- ❖ We have a great high priest, Jesus who was and is faithful in every way
- ❖ We can hold confidently to our hope in Him

REACT

Think about the people who share your house – your physical dwelling place or your church family – and your current relationship with them. Is there someone you should invite to have a cup of coffee or to share a meal so you can catch up and encourage each other?



READ

How joyous are those who love the Lord and bow low before God, ready to obey him! Your reward will be prosperity, happiness, and well-being. Your wife will bless your heart and home. Your children will bring you joy as they gather around your table. Yes, this is God's generous reward for those who love him. May the Lord bless you out of his Zion-glory! May you see the prosperity of Jerusalem throughout your lifetime.

And may you be surrounded by your grandchildren. Happiness to you! And happiness to Israel! (Psalm 128, The Passion translation)

REFLECT

As do many Psalms, this one begins with a pronouncement about the joyfulness of those who love the Lord. "How joyous are those who love the Lord!" That phrase needs an exclamation point. But bowing low ... being ready to obey ... um, not so much. In this psalm, those two postures seem to function as the bridge between the joy of loving God and the rewards of loving Him (prosperity, happiness, well-being, family blessings, and more). They are not just positions for whatever amount of time we spend in prayer during the day. They are life postures that help us orient ourselves and our priorities toward the blessings of God.

REACT

There's no magic in kneeling, but it is a good posture for prayer. When we use our bodies to pray, it sends a signal to our brains that this is different from the rest of the day. Kneeling, bowing down, is a symbolic act of reverence and obedience. Try it when you pray today. Even if you can't physically kneel, find a different way to engage your body in prayer.

3 March 2021



READ

but Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. At dawn he appeared again in the temple courts, where all the people gathered around him, and he sat down to teach them. The teachers of the law and the Pharisees brought in a woman caught in adultery. They made her stand before the group and said to Jesus, "Teacher, this woman was caught in the act of adultery. In the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?" They were using this question as a trap, in order to have a basis for accusing him. But Jesus bent down and started to write on the ground with his finger. When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, "Let any one of you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her." Again he stooped down and wrote on the ground. At this, those who heard began to go away one at a time, the older ones first, until only Jesus was left, with the woman still standing there. Jesus straightened up and asked her, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?" "No one, sir," she said. "Then neither do I condemn you," Jesus declared. "Go now and leave your life of sin." (John 8:1-11)

REFLECT

This story is so well-known that even people who never read a Bible know the phrase, "Let him who is without sin cast the first stone." That phrase appeals to us when we feel unjustly accused or criticized. It appeals a lot less when we are tempted to point out someone else's sin!

REACT

Find a little pebble and carry it around in your pocket today. You don't have to do anything with it -- just let it be a reminder of the great forgiveness you have experienced ... and maybe a cue to offer some of it to others.

4 March 2021



UNMOVING HOPE

READ

Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior. But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation— if you continue in your faith, established and firm, and do not move from the hope held out in the gospel. This is the gospel that you heard and that has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven, and of which I, Paul, have become a servant. (Colossians 1:21-23)

REFLECT

What does “continuing in faith” look like? There are a couple of clues in the passage: Established and firm – This phrase has to do with construction. It literally means making sure that your faith is built on a solid foundation. Ideas, emotions, and circumstances come and go. They can shake us to our core at times, but our faith can stand firm when it's built on the bedrock of God's Word and work in our lives.

Unmoving hope – Paul, who had every reason to lose hope as he suffered for the gospel, reminds us here to not move away from (as in, pack up and move to a new location) our confident expectation that God has indeed forgiven and redeemed us. We never have to abandon our hope in Him because He's never going to move away from us!

REACT

Today is a particularly good time to remind yourself of the hope you have in Christ. Don't keep your list to yourself – share it with someone who needs a fresh infusion of hope today. Let's encourage each other!



OUR GREAT SHEPHERD

READ

Come, let us sing for joy to the Lord; let us shout aloud to the Rock of our salvation. Let us come before him with thanksgiving and extol him with music and song. For the Lord is the great God, the great King above all gods. In his hand are the depths of the earth, and the mountain peaks belong to him. The sea is his, for he made it, and his hands formed the dry land.

Come, let us bow down in worship, let us kneel before the Lord our Maker; for he is our God and we are the people of his pasture, the flock under his care. (Psalm 95:1-7)

REFLECT

For centuries, the church has set aside these weeks before Easter as a time of solemn reflection, confession, repentance and preparation. In that way, Lent sits very comfortably next to dismay, confusion and even fear. Lent acknowledges the worst – sin, darkness, death – but also anticipates the best – forgiveness, light, and new life.

Worship is the bridge. Praise and worship turn our hearts, minds and actions toward God. It isn't a denial of the reality we are actually experiencing, but it is a change of perspective. It tells us once again that the God who created and governs the universe is our God. We are "pastured" – fed, protected, cared for, encircled – by Him. We are not alone, but part of a flock. We receive the loving care of our Great Shepherd and we care for each other.

REACT

Check on your fellow flock members today. A phone call or video chat doesn't compromise anything.

6 March 2021



WALK IN LOVE

READ

The elder, to the lady chosen by God and to her children, whom I love in the truth—and not I only, but also all who know the truth— because of the truth, which lives in us and will be with us forever: Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and from Jesus Christ, the Father's Son, will be with us in truth and love. It has given me great joy to find some of your children walking in the truth, just as the Father commanded us. And now, dear lady, I am not writing you a new command but one we have had from the beginning. I ask that we love one another. And this is love: that we walk in obedience to his commands. As you have heard from the beginning, his command is that you walk in love. (2 John 1:1-6)

REFLECT

Grace, mercy, peace, truth, love ... these are gospel (good news) words. They are gifts of God that we receive and pass on to those around us. They are always good gifts, but maybe more so today. Here is a little reminder of what they look like in real life:

Grace is the favor of God, extended to those who don't deserve it at all. That's us. And, having received it, we also learn to extend it to others.

Mercy is more than being nice or feeling empathy. It's the active compassion of God toward all. It's our active compassion toward others.

Peace is not just a tranquil state of mind. It's a contentment with our present circumstances, even when they're not ideal, because we are confident that God is working all things together for our good.

Truth here has to do with being able to live without pretense or affection. It is the gift of seeing ourselves in light of God's truth, and seeing others the same way.

Love is the freedom to receive and reflect all the gifts of God.

REACT

Breath prayer is a great practice for carrying scripture with you through the day. Today, you might simply use one of these good gospel words as a little prayer throughout your day: "Jesus, be my peace right now," or "Father, help me see through eyes of love," something like that. Breathe the gospel today!