

Daily Devotionals

May 5, 2021

Overall theme for the week: This Sunday's image of the life the risen Christ shares with us is the image of friendship. We are called to serve others as Jesus came to serve; but for John's gospel, the image of servanthood is too hierarchical, too distant, to capture the essence of life with Christ. Friendship captures the love, the joy, the deep mutuality of the relationship into which Christ invites us. The Greeks believed that true friends are willing to die for each other. This is the mutual love of Christian community commanded by Christ and enabled by the Spirit.

Scripture Reading: Acts 10:44-48

While Peter shares the good news of Jesus with a Gentile soldier and his family, the Holy Spirit comes upon them. Recognizing that the Spirit works inclusively in the lives of both Jews and Gentiles, Peter commands that these Gentiles also be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. God's love is no longer just seen as a gift to God's chosen people, but to all who come to believe.

Day 1: Reflect on Acts 10:44-46b

- What impact do you think this experience had on Peter and his Jewish friends?
- How might we reach out with the love of Christ to those outside of our circles?

Day 2: Reflect on Acts 10:46b-48

- How do you think those Gentile converts felt when they, too, were being baptized into the body of Christ?
- What kind of bond do you think developed between these two groups of people from this experience?

Scripture Reading: 1 John 5:1-6

God's children believe that Jesus is the Messiah and love God by keeping God's commandments. Thus the world is conquered not through military might but through love and faith. Those transformed by the love of Christ find true life in mutual love of one another. The power of God's love is what truly changes situations and people.

Day 3: Reflect on 1 John 5:1-2

- What is the source of our ability to follow Christ and obey his commands?
- What measure is given here by which a person can know if they are following God's commands?

Day 4: Reflect on 1 John 5:3-6

- Are the commands of Christ meant to burden us or give us life?

- How can our faith in Christ help us to overcome the challenges of our world today?

Scripture Reading: John 15:9-17

On the night of his arrest, Jesus delivers a final testimony to his disciples to help them in the days ahead. Here, he repeats the most important of all his commands, that they love one another. By abiding in his love, they come to know a deeper relationship with Christ, which results in bearing much fruit in their lives.

Day 5: Reflect on John 15:9-11

- What are ways that you abide in Christ's love on a regular basis?
- How does abiding in Christ's love bring joy to your life?

Day 6: Reflect on John 15:12-17

- What does it mean to you that Christ calls you his friend? How is that different than servant?
- How does being a friend of Christ help you to bear fruit in your life?

Day 7: Psalm 98

¹Sing a new song to the LORD, who has done marvelous things,
whose right hand and holy arm have won the victory.

²O LORD, you have made known your victory,
you have revealed your righteousness in the sight of the nations.

³You remember your steadfast love and faithfulness to the house of Israel;
all the ends of the earth have seen the victory of our God.

⁴Shout with joy to the LORD, all you lands; lift up your voice, rejoice, and sing.

⁵Sing to the LORD with the harp, with the harp and the voice of song.

⁶With trumpets and the sound of the horn, shout with joy before the king, the LORD.

⁷Let the sea roar, and all that fills it, the world and those who dwell therein.

⁸Let the rivers clap their hands, and let the hills ring out with joy before the LORD, who comes to judge the earth.

⁹The LORD will judge the world with righteousness and the peoples with equity.

Reflect upon the image of praising God with our whole selves for all the wonderful things God has done for us. How is it good news that the God is victorious and will judge the world with righteousness and the peoples with equity?

We give thanks for the power of the resurrection found in Christ that calls us his friends. The power of the resurrection helps us to abide in Christ and find a deeper, mutual relationship with God and one another. May the power of the resurrection found in Christ's love for us help us to abide in Christ so that we may follow his commands and know true love and joy.