

AUGUST 29, 2021
FOURTEENTH SUNDAY
AFTER PENTECOST



Maintaining the heart of our Christian faith.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

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

Sunday	Mark 7:1-23	Authentic faith
Monday	Deuteronomy 4:1-2, 6-9	God commands obedience
Tuesday	James 1:17-27	Hearing and doing the word
Wednesday	2 Timothy 3:6-16	A good minister of Jesus Christ
Thursday	Galatians 5:22-26	The fruit of the Spirit
Friday	Romans 1:8-15	Prayer for thanksgiving
Saturday	Psalms 15	Who shall abide with God?
Sunday	Mark 7:24-37	Jesus heals the Gentiles

SCRIPTURE VERSE FOR THIS WEEK

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 (NRSV)

PRAYERS AND BLESSING

A Prayer for the Week:

Dear God, help us to act in ways that show your love for us and our love for you and all people through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Mealtime Prayer:

Loving God, we thank you for this food and pray that all may have food to eat, a roof over their heads, and security for their daily lives. Amen.

A Blessing to Give:

May God's justice and mercy set you free to love and serve others through Christ Jesus our Lord.



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HYMN OF THE WEEK
Great Is Thy Faithfulness



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:

- Think or talk about a time when you or someone you know said you would do one thing but then did the total opposite.
- How do you feel about someone who tells you something about themselves that is not true?
- What does it mean to you that Peter said that Jesus is the Holy One of God?

DEVOTIONS

Read: Mark 7:1-23.

We may be more like the Pharisees and scribes than we would like to admit. They wanted to protect God's teachings and honor God's word with their whole life. They set up all kinds of pious actions like hand washing to represent this singular attention. Jesus called them hypocrites for some of these practices. In the process of valuing and protecting God's importance in our lives, it is possible for us to miss the heart of it all. The Book of James reminds us to keep it simple: care for those in need and keep oneself "unstained by the world" (James 1:27). Even our best efforts at keeping pure will fall short. Jesus reminds us all of our hypocrisy that needs cleansing and forgiveness. The heart of the Christian faith is Christ's grace that places us all in the same need of forgiveness. That, in turn, sets us free to care for others instead of condemning them. In your heart of hearts, what is something that you do that is inconsistent with what you think is right or best?

Pray: Almighty God, help us to repent of anything that turns our hearts from loving you and caring for our neighbor. In Christ Jesus we pray, amen.

SERVICE

James tells us to be doers of God's word. In Jesus' time that included caring for orphans and widows. Who are the people that need your help today? School has either started or will start soon. Be aware of those who feel alone and may need a friend. How can you be a doer and not just a hearer of God's word?

RITUALS AND TRADITIONS

Sometimes our doing gets in the way of our being. We can miss the joy of daily life while working to save up time and money to enjoy life. It is true of our faith life as well. We can faithfully attend Christian worship and forget to daily pay attention to Christ's love that sets us free. Take time this week to sit in silence and imagine your loving Savior standing in front of you. End by praying: **Thank you, God, for _____.**



In addition to *Taking Faith Home*, celebrate milestones in your daily life as an effective faith formation tool. Go to: www.milestonesministry.org