

Daily Walk on the Rock



St. Paul Lutheran Church

“Your Refuge from the Storm”

Date: October 29, 2023

Text: Jeremiah 31:31-34; Romans 3:19-28

**Theme: Restoration
Restoring Our Identity**

Day 1: Monday—A Study in Contrasts

Other religions offer what they say is truth; Jesus says he is the truth (*John 14:6*); others enumerate works one must do to be saved; Jesus finished the work of salvation and simply invites us to believe (*John 3:16; 6:29; 19:30*). Our faith is not based on our works but in God, who took the initiative, became flesh, bore our sin and guilt, accepted death—the punishment we deserve (*Romans 6:23*), and offers us his life and righteousness. Are you trying to earn your way into God’s kingdom; do you measure your goodness or worth by looking at others, or have you thrown yourself into the loving arms of our Redeemer God? Read *John 1:12-13; Ephesians 2:8-9; and Titus 3:4-7*. Pray!

Day 2: Tuesday—A Righteous Judge

In our courts of law, we would disdain a judge who winked at wrong and acquitted the guilty, yet often we act as if that is exactly what we expect God to do. Scripture, however, paints a different picture: sin is judged (*Romans 6:23a*), but then we see something absolutely breathtaking and amazing: God, the judge of all the earth (*Hebrews 12:23-24a*), steps down from the bench, assumes the guilt, accepts the death penalty, and dresses the criminal (us) in his own pristine robe. Read *Romans 3:10-12, 19-28; 2 Corinthians 5:21; 2 Timothy 4:1a; and Isaiah 61:10*. Pray.

Day 3: Wednesday—Mercy and Grace

We sing songs such as “Amazing Grace” (Newton) and “There’s a Wideness in God’s Mercy” (Faber), but do we stop to ponder what the words mercy and grace mean? Stated simply, mercy is not receiving what we deserve (God’s wrath and judgment); it embraces God’s compassion; grace is receiving what we do not deserve (God’s riches at Christ’s expense). Search for insight into God’s mercy and grace as you read *Psalm 51:1-2; Isaiah 55:6-7; Lamentations 3:21-26; Daniel 9:17-19; Romans 3:19-28; Ephesians 2:4-9, and Hebrews 4:16*. Ponder the wonder of God’s unfathomable love; with a thankful heart, ask God how you can show mercy and grace to others.

Day 4: Thursday—Atonement

Atonement is a “churchy” word, but one that’s important to understand. It is about reconciliation and God’s action and initiative. We cannot atone for our own sin and restore our relationship with God, which is broken by sin, but God, in Christ, does what we cannot do. In the Hebrew Scriptures, the blood of sacrificed ani-

mals “covered” the sin of the people; it looked ahead to the perfect sacrifice, when the cross became the altar and Jesus the sacrificial Lamb. Read *Leviticus 17:11; John 1:29; Romans 3:23-26; 5:6-11; 2 Corinthians 5:14-21; and Hebrews 7:26-27; 9:22; 10:11-14*. Spend time telling Jesus, the spotless Lamb of God, of your gratitude and love. Worship him.

Day 5: Friday—Justification Justification refers to our right standing before God. When we are justified, we aren’t made righteous; we are declared righteous. What is the difference? We are declared righteous, not because of our action, but because of Jesus’ death on the cross. And we embrace this gift by faith. Read *Genesis 15:1-6; Romans 3:19-28; 4:13-25; 8:31-34; and Galatians 2:15-21*. Ponder God’s activity in grace, justification, and even faith. Meditate on the reality that it’s all a gift as you read *Romans 5:8-9; Ephesians 2:8-9 and Hebrews 12:2a*. How will you respond to such amazing love? The gift is of infinite worth, costly beyond measure (*John 3:16*). Read *Revelation 3:20; pray*.

Day 6: Saturday—Redeemed! To be redeemed is to be ransomed, set free, and delivered from bondage. In the Exodus, we see God deliver the Israelites from physical slavery and bring them into the Promised Land. God gives his people the Covenant (Law) and provides numerous pictures that point to Jesus; the prophets amplify the pictures and promises, and Jesus fulfills them (*2 Corinthians 1:20*). Jesus, our deliverer, redeems us from sin and death and promises us eternal life in his presence. Read *Exodus 19:3-6; Jeremiah 31:31-34; Mark 14:22-26; Galatians 4:4-7; Hebrews 9:11-15; 10:14-23; and 1 Peter 2:9-10*. Prayerfully ponder all this and then allow *Revelation 5:9-14* to form your prayer.


Day 7: Sunday—“In Christ Alone”

Read *Romans 3:19-28*; reflect on the week’s key themes; pray your heart, and meditate on Getty and Townend’s lyrics: “In Christ alone my hope is found; He is my light, my strength, my song... In Christ alone, who took on flesh, fullness of God in helpless Babe; this gift of love and righteousness, scorned by the ones He came to save. Til on the cross as Jesus died, the wrath of God was satisfied, for ev’ry sin on Him was laid, here in the death of Christ I live... Then bursting forth in glorious day, up from the grave, He rose again, and as He stands in victory, sin’s curse has lost its grip on me... bought with the precious blood of Christ...” (*2001, bankYou Music*).



Deuteronomy 6:7 is a call for parents/grandparents/adults to talk about faith issues throughout the day. We have a chance to be facilitators of intentional connect conversations with our children. Here is what the verse says about faith matters...

“Impress them upon your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.” -Deut 6:7



Mealtime
...when you sit at home...

Read the following Verses:
- Romans 3:23-24
- John 3:16

Finish one of the phrases:
- I sin when I...
- I do not measure up to God's plans when I...

Now read John 3:16 and finish the following phrase:
- God loves me so much that God...

Prayer:
Christ Jesus, thank you for paying the price to set us free from the consequences of our sins. Help us to know your forgiving love – the free gift of your grace that makes all of us right with you. Amen!



Drivetime ...along the road...

Key Verse:
We have been made right with God because of our faith. Now we have peace with him because of our Lord Jesus Christ.
- Romans 5:1

Questions:
We have been made right with God because of our faith in whom?
Do you feel like you have a right or harmonious relationship with God?
How much faith in Jesus Christ do you have – a lot, a little, not enough?

Prayer:
Make the peace sign as other cars drive by and pray:
Dear God, thank you for making us right with you because of our faith in Jesus Christ. We pray for God's peace in our lives and the lives of those we know, and even for those just passing by. We love you. Amen!

Morningtime
...when you get up...

Exercise restores the body, mind and spirit. Begin your day by exercising all three! Touch your toes while thinking about this: Through faith in Jesus we have received God's grace. Stand upright with your hands on your hips and think: In that grace we stand. Now, reach your hands to the ceiling or sky while thinking: We are full of joy because we expect to share in God's glory. Repeat 3-5 times for an easy morning workout! -Rm 5:2

Connect Tip:
15 minutes a day is a great goal for having conversation if you don't have any current goal in mind.

Nighttime
...when you lie down...

Question:
Have you ever been between a rock and a hard place?
In other words, have you ever felt stuck in a situation with no good answer?

Read:
Isaiah 43:1-3

Say:
God tells us that even when we find ourselves between a rock and a hard place or in over our heads, that we don't need to be afraid. God redeems and saves us, and calls us by name into a personal relationship!

Say:
Share a time you've been between a rock and a hard place, or a time you've been in over your head. Did you know at the time that God was with you?

Night Time Prayer:
Creator God, the one who calls each person in our family by name. We thank you for setting us free from the sin that overwhelms and traps us. We are so glad that you call us into a right relationship with you. Amen!

Parents are the #1 influence in the lives of their children. 6:7 is a tool to help families engage in those meaningful conversations. St. Paul Lutheran Church, Kodiak, AK

LifeGroup Study

Date: October 29, 2023

Text: Jeremiah 31:31-34; Romans 3:19-28

**Theme: Restoration:
Restoring Our Identity**

Belong In Genesis, we learn that on the sixth day God formed man from the dust of the earth and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, creating a living being. God blessed man and told him to be fruitful and take care of the earth. As the sixth day drew to an end God saw all that he had made and it was very good, everything was in perfect harmony and in a perfect relationship with God. At that moment everything was very good indeed. Of course, you know the rest of the story about the fall of humanity in the Garden of Eden and the separation that happened between God and man. From that point in time God has been pursuing us in order to restore our relationship with God. God pursues us not to make sure we are doing the right things or to catch us making a mistake but because of a deep love for us. God's desire for us is to be in a relationship with God so that we may experience to the fullest the life God intended for us. This week's text gives us insight into the depth of God's love and how God has been restoring our relationship through God's righteousness.

Prayer... Heavenly Father, we long to be in deep relationship with you, knowing that is what will bring us life. We open ourselves to you today so that we may come to know and believe the gift of life you given to us. Amen.

Believe Read Jeremiah 31:31-34. The prophet Jeremiah was known for his prophetic messages that confronted the people of Judah about their sin and for forsaking God. His ministry in the southern kingdom spanned the reign of many kings of Judah which was ultimately overthrown by the Babylonians around the year 587 B.C.

The people were not responding to the warnings from Jeremiah and the old covenant that God had intended to use to build a relationship with them was not working. In this text, God declares to Jeremiah that God is going to make a new covenant with the house of Israel even though the people had rebelled and turned away from him. God could have easily gotten fed up with them but out of love for them God gave them another chance. God decided to go straight to the heart of the matter by writing God's laws on their hearts so that they would know God without being taught.

- *What does it mean to follow the law? Why was that not working?*
- *What does verse 33 mean? How does that relate to us today?*
- *How does God's righteousness fit into this text?*

Read Romans 3:19-28. To be righteous means to be in a right or harmonious relationship with God and, of course, God desires that everyone is in a "right" relationship with him. Earlier in Romans

Paul writes that it's not those who merely hear the law that will be declared righteous but those who obey the law. Yet, if we look back at Jeremiah and other texts, it's clear that man has trouble keeping the law. Paul puts an exclamation point on that point by saying that all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

- *What does it mean to be declared righteous?*
- *Why is the law ineffective at helping us be in a right relationship with God? Is there a purpose for the law?*

So if it's not the law that will put us in a right relationship with God since no matter how hard we try or desire to follow it, we will never be able to live up to it, what is the answer? It's clear that God has been pursuing us since the beginning so that we can be in a relationship with God, yet that seems out of reach for us. Paul goes on to reveal God's plan to move beyond the law to clearly and absolutely make it possible for all to have a deep and right relationship with him; a plan that centers on Jesus. In John 3:17 we learn that God sent Jesus not to condemn the world but to save the world through him and that saving the world centers on restoring the relationship he has with us.

- *How do you think Jesus helps us restore our relationship with God?*

Paul reveals that it's our faith in Jesus that puts us in a right relationship with God; that since we've all sinned and can't possibly live up to the law we need help; we can't do it on our own. So what does it mean to have faith in Jesus Christ? It can't mean that we must meet some set of conditions since that was what the law was all about. Faith is putting our complete trust in God and that his declaration of our righteousness through Jesus is true. God is telling us that we no longer need to earn God's love and approval. This allows us to open our hearts to him and not only know his love but be able to freely give the love he has placed within us, restoring a right relationship with him.

- *What does it mean that righteousness comes through faith in Jesus?*
- *What does it mean to be justified by faith?*
- *How does someone become righteous?*
- *How does God restore our relationship through righteousness?*

Become God wants a relationship with us, knowing that as we move deeper into a relationship with God, it will motivate us into being an active part of God's unfolding kingdom here on earth. God knows that as we place our trust in God, the love that God has placed deep within us will move from being something that we feel coming to us to something that moves out of us towards God and each other. It's the outward expression of love that starts to work on our hearts and drives us to want a deeper relationship with God. As we move closer to God we begin to realize and live the life God intended, one that is fully focused on God and one that is possible only from being restored by God.

Prayer... Lord God, thank you for never giving up on us. Restore us, Lord, so that, as your church, we may be active parts of your kingdom on earth. Amen.