

SEPTEMBER 2, 2018
FIFTEENTH SUNDAY
AFTER PENTECOST

taking+ faith home

God's word leads us to practice justice.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

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

Sunday	Mark 7:1-8, 14-15, 21-23	Authentic faith
Monday	Deuteronomy 4:1-2, 6-9	God commands obedience
Tuesday	James 1:17-27	Hearing and doing the word
Wednesday	Micah 6:6-8	What God requires
Thursday	Matthew 15:1-20	Tradition of the elders
Friday	Amos 5:21-24	The importance of justice
Saturday	Psalms 15	Who worships the Lord
Sunday	Mark 7:24-37	Jesus heals the Gentiles

SCRIPTURE VERSE FOR THIS WEEK

And what other great nation has statutes and ordinances as just as this entire law that I am setting before you today? **Deuteronomy 4:8 (NRSV)**

PRAYERS AND BLESSING

A Prayer for the Week:

Lord, help us to hear your message of salvation in a way that leads us to act with justice and mercy. Amen.

Mealtime Prayer:

Plates of food, gifts from above, signs of our God's gracious love. Amen.

A Blessing to Give:

May the God who gave you birth by the word of truth give you peace and good courage. (James 1:18)



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HYMN OF THE WEEK

*What a Fellowship,
What a Joy Divine*

CARING CONVERSATIONS

Discuss in your home or small group:

- Why is it important to follow rules?
- What do you like about God's rules?
- In Deuteronomy 4:7-8, God's rules show the greatness of God and the justice of God to all the world. What is it about God that you want to tell the world?

DEVOTIONS

Read: Deuteronomy 4:1-2, 6-9.

The God of Israel ruled with justice, mercy, and reliability that foreign gods lacked. The challenge of Israel was not to forget the God of Israel and the ways of God. This challenge carried with it the need to tell the children and future generations what the people had experienced and learned through the goodness and justice of God (v. 9). How does following Jesus help you live with God's justice and mercy? How do you make the goodness and mercy of God known to others—to your friends and family and others that you work and play with?

Pray: Dear God, your justice and mercy is filled with care for all. Thank you for caring for us and guiding us in kindness for others. Help us to tell of your goodness to those around us and to generations yet unborn. In Jesus' name. Amen.

SERVICE

In James 1:17-26 being "doers of the word" implies a meekness that is not prideful. Instead, it acts with mercy that includes caring for "orphans and widows in their distress" (v. 27). Orphans and widows represented those who were vulnerable and did not have a social safety net to keep them fed, sheltered, and safe. Think of those locally and around the world who lack security of food and shelter. Make a financial commitment to an organization that helps these people or contribute your time and talents to work on behalf of the hungry and homeless.

RITUALS AND TRADITIONS

In Mark 7:1-23, discipline shapes the soul. Ordinances mentioned in Deuteronomy 4:1 promote a way of life that includes rituals and traditions. These ordinances—these rituals and traditions—help remind us of the goodness of God. Rituals and traditions have often lost their appeal because they have become disconnected from the grace of God that helps us live with others in peace and hope. It is important to practice the Christian faith in a way that connects the message of God's love with our daily lives. Giving a blessing, offering a mealtime prayer, reading the Bible, and daily prayers, including the Lord's Prayer, are all valuable ways to discipline our lives in hope and faith. Look at this week's *Taking Faith Home* and identify faith practices you will commit to doing this week. Consider making these practices part of your routine to guide and encourage your life of faith.



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