

SEPTEMBER 16, 2018
SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY
AFTER PENTECOST

taking+ faith home

Take up your cross and follow.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

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

Sunday	Mark 8:27-38	Taking up the cross
Monday	Isaiah 50:4-9a	God's servant must suffer
Tuesday	James 3:1-12	Controlling the tongue
Wednesday	Philippians 3:7-16	Running towards the goal
Thursday	Hebrews 12:1-13	The example of Jesus
Friday	1 Peter 5:6-11	God will restore those suffering
Saturday	Psalms 116:1-9	A prayer of thanksgiving
Sunday	Mark 9:30-37	The servant of all is greatest

SCRIPTURE VERSE FOR THIS WEEK

He [Jesus] called the crowd with his disciples, and said to them, "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me." **Mark 8:34 (NRSV)**

PRAYERS AND BLESSING

A Prayer for the Week:

Lord Jesus Christ, give us strength, courage, and faith to take up our cross and follow you. Amen.

Mealtime Prayer:

Lord Jesus, as we chew and as we swallow, make us strong to love and follow. Amen.

A Blessing to Give:

May God's goodness give you peace in your heart and in your mind. May the Lord protect you with kindness. (Psalm 116:5-7)



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HYMN OF THE WEEK

Give Me Jesus

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CARING CONVERSATIONS

Discuss in your home or small group:

- Talk about a tough time in your life.
- How have you been challenged to grow through your tough times?
- In Mark 8:27-38, Peter rejected Jesus' acceptance of his innocent suffering and death. How are we tempted to reject suffering—the way of the cross—as the way of salvation and new life?

DEVOTIONS

Read: Psalm 116:1-9.

This is a psalm of thanksgiving that acknowledges personal suffering (v. 3), a prayer for help (v. 4), God's response (vv. 1-2, 5-8), and the psalmist's response of thanksgiving and faithfulness (vv. 1, 9). A psalm or prayer of thanksgiving is a living testimony to the goodness of God in the midst of difficult times. It is a way to tell good news to others as well as remember God's goodness the next time one goes through tough times. Think of a difficult time you have gone through and how God's grace and mercy got you through it. Write it as a prayer that acknowledges the personal suffering, how God was present to you, and how you declare your response of thanksgiving and trust in God. Conclude this prayer by reciting, "I love the Lord" (v. 1a).

Pray: The Lord's Prayer.

SERVICE

In James 3:1-12 it highlights that what we say can offer words of encouragement or words that destroy others. A whole commandment is dedicated to not bearing false witness against another person. This week pause and reflect before saying anything that could be perceived as harmful to another person. When speaking of others, make it a point "to come to their defense, speak well of them and interpret everything they do in the best possible light" (Martin Luther's meaning for the Eighth Commandment).

RITUALS AND TRADITIONS

In Mark 8:27-38 the life of the cross of Christ is not easy and, according to Peter, not even wanted. But according to Jesus it is the way of salvation. Write down on slips of paper how God may be calling you to take up your cross and follow Jesus. Perhaps it is to reach out to others in their distress. Maybe it is to forgive someone you would rather not forgive. Consider including some difficulty you are experiencing and how you may find new life and meaning through it. Stick the slips of paper on a cross you have in your home or on one you make. Look at what you wrote each day this next week and say aloud: **"If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me."**

