

APRIL 29, 2018
FIFTH SUNDAY
OF EASTER



God's love is the power that enables human love.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

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

Sunday	John 15:1-8	Jesus the true vine
Monday	Acts 8:26-40	Philip and the eunuch
Tuesday	1 John 4:7-21	God is love
Wednesday	Deuteronomy 10:12-19	What the Lord wants
Thursday	Mark 12:28-34	The first commandment
Friday	Galatians 3:23-29	Purpose of the law
Saturday	Psalms 22:25-31	A vow of thanksgiving
Sunday	John 15:9-17	Love one another

SCRIPTURE VERSE FOR THIS WEEK

In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. **1 John 4:10 (NRSV)**

PRAYERS AND BLESSING

A Prayer for the Week:

Loving God, just as you reached out to the Ethiopian eunuch and claimed him as your own in baptism, help your church to share your love throughout the world. Amen.

Mealtime Prayer:

All good gifts around us are sent from heaven above; so thank you Lord, for all you give, this food and drink and love. Amen.

A Blessing to Give:

May the love of God bless you, live in you, and be perfected in you. (1 John 4:12)



© 2017 Milestones Ministry, LLC. All rights reserved.

APRIL 29, 2018

HYMN OF THE WEEK

Gather Us In



CARING CONVERSATIONS

Discuss in your home or small group:

- Tell a story about how you have been loved by others.
- How is God's love for us shown through Jesus?
- Why is it important to know that God's love for us comes before we can love God?

DEVOTIONS

Read: Acts 8:26-40 or the story of the Ethiopian eunuch in a storybook Bible.

The eunuch could not have a child and was a social and religious outcast. When the eunuch asks, "What is to prevent me from being baptized?", there were clear human standards that could prevent this religious act. However, the eunuch's baptism is not about human standards of performance, but God's. The story begins and ends with the role of the Spirit of God (vv. 26, 29, and 39). If baptism is a human act, the eunuch would be prevented from baptism, but in the New Testament, the Christian baptism is God's act, not a human act. That is why entire families—people of all ages—were baptized (Acts 16:15, 33). In baptism God comes and breaks down barriers that separate us from the love of God by claiming us as God's children. God comes to us and loves us before we can ever come to God and love God (John 15:5 and 1 John 4:10, 19). If that were not the case, the danger would be that we will never know for sure if our approach to God was pure enough or faithful enough. Thanks be to God, our relationship to God is not based on our pure heart but God's. Reflect on God's love as the power that enables our love for God and for others.

Pray: The Lord's Prayer.

SERVICE

The Easter joy began with women at the empty tomb being sent out with a message that Jesus has been raised (Mark 16:6). We, like the women are sent out into the world with the good news of Jesus Christ's victory over sin and death. It was the same for Philip who met the Ethiopian eunuch on a wilderness road (Acts 8:26). As you meet people in your daily activities, find ways through your words and actions to communicate God's love to them. Whose life can you touch today with the freedom of the gospel that has conquered sin and death? Pray for Christian outreach throughout the world.

RITUALS AND TRADITIONS

Christianity in Ethiopia dates back to the first century and is likely the first nation to accept Christianity. In honor of the conversion of the Ethiopian eunuch and the long history of Christianity in Ethiopia, consider having an Easter meal traditional to Ethiopia, one that includes a sour dough bread (*injera*) and a lamb stew (*beg wot*). Make it more festive by inviting family and friends. Include *A Prayer of the Week* and the *Mealtime Prayer* with the Ethiopian meal.



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