

FEBRUARY 5, 2023
FIFTH SUNDAY
AFTER EPIPHANY



The power of knowing Christ crucified.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

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

Sunday	Matthew 5:13-20	Salt and light
Monday	Isaiah 58:1-12	False and true worship
Tuesday	1 Corinthians 2:1-16	True wisdom of God
Wednesday	Isaiah 40:27-31	The Lord gives strength
Thursday	1 Peter 4:12-16	Suffering as a Christian
Friday	James 1:2-8	Faith and wisdom
Saturday	Psalms 112	Blessings of the righteous
Sunday	Matthew 5:21-37	Teachings of Jesus

SCRIPTURE VERSE FOR THIS WEEK

When I [Paul] came to you, brothers and sisters, I did not come proclaiming the mystery of God to you in lofty words or wisdom. For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and him crucified. 1 Corinthians 2:1-2 (NRSV)

PRAYERS AND BLESSING

A Prayer for the Week:

Loving God, give us your wisdom to see in the cross of Christ the path of love, humility, and service to others above all else. Amen.

Mealtime Prayer:

Dear God, with this food give us strength to care for the needs of others as you care for us each and every day. In the name of Jesus, our crucified Savior and Lord. Amen.

A Blessing to Give:

May you take delight in the wisdom of God through our crucified Lord Jesus Christ.



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HYMN OF THE WEEK

Lift High the Cross



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:

- What motivates people to show they are more powerful than others?
- How does God show wisdom and power through the crucifixion of Jesus Christ?

DEVOTIONS

Read: 1 Corinthians 2:1-16.

The Corinthian church was a divided church. Some thought they had superior wisdom or superior spiritual gifts. Paul rejects such claims by focusing on God's wisdom revealed through Jesus Christ. Jesus was crucified and died a criminal's death at the hands of earthly powers. Those who believe they have superior wisdom and gifts totally miss the point and rely on human standards—human wisdom—not God's. Paul's own ministry demonstrates the wisdom of God that seems like foolishness to the world. Paul did not use impressive speech. He used the message of Christ crucified, a message made powerful by the Holy Spirit, not human rhetoric. To be truly "spiritual," and therefore a blessing to the church, one needs to be grounded in spiritual wisdom that understands the power of the cross. This power can look like weakness. The very standards the arrogant use to feel superior shows their dependence on the powers and wisdom of the current age, not the power and wisdom of God through Christ crucified.

Discuss: Being forgiven can look like weakness. How can it be a powerful gift to the life of the church?

Pray: **Almighty God, help us to see that in the death of Jesus your power is present to guide our daily lives and bring faith, hope, and love to all the world. Amen.**

SERVICE

Jesus calls us to serve our neighbor in love. Based on the Daily Bible Readings for this week, how might you help people who feel put down by others?

RITUALS AND TRADITIONS

Where Christ is present in faith, the home is church, too! God is present in our daily lives. The home is where people are connected in intimate daily settings. Where we call home can be diverse. Matthew 5:15-16 reminds us that we don't hide the light of a lamp under a basket. We place it where "it gives light to all in the house." Jesus tells us we are the light of the world and invites us to shine our light so that others may see our good works and give glory to God. Light a candle each day this week. While you gaze at the light, think or talk about what "good works" (v. 16) you have done that day and how what you did gives glory to God.



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