

JULY 15, 2018
EIGHTH SUNDAY
AFTER PENTECOST



Indescribable joy of God's generosity.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

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

Sunday	Mark 6:14-29	The death of John the Baptist
Monday	Amos 7:7-15	Vision of the plumb line
Tuesday	Ephesians 1:3-14	Thanksgiving for blessings
Wednesday	Leviticus 26:1-13	Rewards for obedience
Thursday	Romans 3:9-26	God's judgment and mercy
Friday	Proverbs 11:23-30	A generous person
Saturday	Psalms 85:8-13	God speaks peace to the people
Sunday	Mark 6:30-34, 53-56	Jesus teaches and heals the people

SCRIPTURE VERSE FOR THIS WEEK

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, just as he chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless before him in love. **Ephesians 1:3-4 (NRSV)**

PRAYERS AND BLESSING

A Prayer for the Week:

Thank you, O God, for choosing to save us. Continue to give us your Holy Spirit so that the way we live gives praise to you. Amen.

Mealttime Prayer:

Receive our thanks for night and day, for food and water, rest and play. Lord, be our guest and with us stay. Amen.

A Blessing to Give:

Child of God, may the Lord, who has chosen you, bless you generously through our Lord Jesus Christ. (Ephesians 1:3-4)



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HYMN OF THE WEEK
*Love Divine,
All Love Excelling*



CARING CONVERSATIONS

Discuss in your home or small group:

- What words would you use to describe love?
- What picture or image would you use to describe living in the joy of God's presence?
- Ephesians 1:3-14 offers poetic language filled with heavenly grandeur to give a sense of God's generosity and our benefits. What images give you the greatest sense of comfort and joy?

DEVOTIONS

Read: Ephesians 1:3-14.

We are reminded of all the blessings God has given to us through Jesus (v. 3). Take two to three minutes to have a "Blessing Brainstorm." Write down as many blessings—physical, emotional, social, and spiritual—that are part of your life. Offer a prayer of thanks for the blessings you have recorded. During the week add to the original list of blessings as you continue to imagine how God's love in Christ has touched your life.

Pray: Dear God, we thank you for all our blessings and ask that you help us appreciate them and keep them in our hearts. Amen.

SERVICE

In Psalm 85:8 it reads: "Let me hear what God the LORD will speak, for he will speak peace to his people, to his faithful, to those who turn to him in their hearts." God's faithful ones hear of God's peace and are faithful to God's desire and work for peace. The intimacy and power of God's love gets poetic emphasis in verse 10: "Steadfast love and faithfulness will meet; righteousness and peace will kiss each other." Reflect on God's desire for love, peace, and faithfulness, in your life. Select some way to offer peace and reconciliation to an individual or in support of a larger effort or organization that pursues peace with justice in the world.

RITUALS AND TRADITIONS

The prophets of the Old Testament are known to use visual examples of God's judgment and grace. In Amos 7:7-15, God allows Amos to see a plumb line, a carpenter's tool that has a weight on the end of a string to establish a straight vertical line to construct a straight wall. The plumb line communicates God's righteous judgment, the law of God that shows how all people have fallen short of the will of God (Romans 3:9-26). The good news is that the condemning law of God is necessary to grasp and receive God's grace, God's undeserved kindness that is the source of salvation. Take a string and put a weight on the end of it and write on the weight, "Amos 7:7-15." Hang the "plumb line" somewhere in your home to remind you of God's righteous law that leads to God's mercy and grace.



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