



**GOBIN CHURCH**  
A United Methodist Community for All

Dear God, Thank you for this teaching from Peter. Thank you for sending shepherds to be examples to the flock, to teach your love and kindness and peace. As you guide me, I will try to grow – not quickly, but with earnestness and faith – hoping that I can share honestly the wisdom you freely give. Amen.

**Saturday, Oct. 17, 2020**

Matthew 14:1-12

We are meant to be shocked at this terrible crime in today's scripture. Good people, especially when they struggle for justice, often suffer when greed and power take over. In Herod we see a ruler who abuses his power, treats religion as a spectacle or news item, makes grandiose promises which he regrets, then kills on a whim. We have known such in our day. In chapter 13 of Luke's gospel, Jesus calls Herod "that fox." John the Baptist had the courage to speak out when it would have been safer to have said nothing. He died as a result. Heads have rolled throughout history when good people stood their ground. The fate of John the Baptist has been repeated in wars for justice, for religion and for faith. The scripture poses many questions we can ponder. Ask yourself, if I had been one of Herod's guests then, would I have protested or stayed silent? Today, what do I do, when I see others suffering injustice? And if like Herod I make a bad decision, have I the courage to reverse it, even at cost to myself?

Dear God, Strengthen my weak heart so that I may truly witness to your values. I am not as straight as I would wish to be, nor worthy to be in your company. But I wish for true integrity, like yours. I pray that today's unjust treatments of your children will end peacefully as all hearts and minds turn to your goodness and love. Amen.

**DAILY SCRIPTURE MEDITATIONS**

**Monday, Oct. 12, 2020**

Jude 17-25

Jude tells us this morning that divisions within the church are caused by "scoffers," by "worldly people" who are "devoid of the Spirit." It's not surprising that Jude would say that. That is what we all say. Few leaders, in any of the thousands of twigs of the Christian tree, are going to say we exist because we have fashioned our faith to fit our lifestyles. But we're not above saying such things about others outside of our tribe. And yet these are the words from today's reading that catch our attention. It is the splinter in our neighbor's eye that we notice, despite the log in our own. Jude leads us away from judging others and redirects us back to getting our own house in order.

What are we encouraged to do? To grow in our faith and understanding, to pray for help, to rely on the love of God, to anticipate the mercy of Jesus Christ, and to lead with that same mercy in our relationships and witness to the world. May we do just that.

Dear God, You are merciful to us. May we show mercy to others. You love us. May we love others well. Rather than tearing down others, use us to build up our common witness – that we all might grow in faith, understanding, mercy, and love. Amen.

## **Tuesday, Oct. 13, 2020**

Philippians 3:13-4:1

Although Christians are called to be like Christ, we continue to make mistakes. We have not arrived at our goal, yet. We fail, repeatedly. But, thankfully, God uses our imperfections to grow us in faith. Paul was laser-focused on the race, the goal, the finish line. Like an Olympian runner, he would not look back at his failures. Now remember, Paul had a notable past as Saul, who violently persecuted the church. He played a part in the stoning of the disciple Stephen, and he could have let guilt and shame cripple him for that. But Paul didn't dwell on his sufferings, beatings, shipwrecks and imprisonment. He looked forward resolutely toward the finish line where he would see the face of Jesus.

Paul knew that God alone was the source of his salvation as well as the source of his spiritual growth. I think the closer we get to the finish line, the more we realize how much further we have to go. Let's be encouraged by Paul's emphasis on forgetting the past and straining forward to what lies ahead. Don't let past failures derail you from the goal of your call to press on for the prize, when you meet Jesus at the finish line.

Dear God, I've done some stupid stuff in my life. Forgive me for being slow to become the person you want me to be. I study and try to learn, and just when I think I've got it, I goof up again. Ugh. Thank you for sticking with me. Thank you for encouraging me. Help me leave all those mistakes behind as I press on toward the goal. Amen.

## **Wednesday, Oct. 14, 2020**

John 6:25-35

Today's scriptures is the first of many times Jesus says he is the Bread of Life from heaven. He tells his followers he is not only the giver but the sustainer of our lives. He becomes our living nourishment, day by day, strengthening and sustaining us. In the prayer of example that Jesus taught, he asks God to "give us this day our daily bread." Each time we pray those words, we are not asking for food, but for Jesus to be active in our lives.

What is really great is that everyone is invited to feast at the banquet table. Jesus is bread for everyone. We are to invite others to join us on our journey as we gain understanding of Jesus as the bread that satisfies the hungry heart with all good things. Who can you invite to the table today?

Dear God, I thank you for my daily bread. Jesus comes in many flavors, all of them good. And his goodness is so plentiful, help me share him with others. Amen.

## **Thursday, Oct. 15, 2020**

3 John 9-12

In this scripture, John is publicly rebuking a man named Diotrephes by name. Wow! Talk about calling someone out to the playground to fight, as my kids might say. But John is not encouraging a fight or discord among the Christian community. He's pointing out how too often we can put ourselves and our own interests above the good of the community.

I remember as a youth how my parents would read the daily newspaper, and I would wait for the "well, isn't that a shame." My mother would read a news report of some incident – drinking driving, a theft or some violent act – and usually end with a statement such as – "his mother probably isn't proud of him today, is she?" It was a not-so-subtle way of instilling in me a strong desire to never do things that would bring shame to my family or intentionally cause harm to anyone.

Thankfully, we serve a forgiving God who lets us learn from our mistakes, repent, and move forward. He may call us out when we need it, but it is up to us to live up to the great potential freely given to us.

Dear God, Each day you watch over me and guide me. Forgive me when I stubbornly refuse your help and guidance. Soothe the sting of the rebukes I rightfully receive, and help me to grow through my mistakes into the person you want me to be. Amen.

## **Friday, Oct. 16, 2020**

1 Peter 5:1-5

Of all the disciples of Jesus, who would have thought Peter would write these words of today's scripture text to the leaders of the churches? In Matthew's gospel, Peter argued with Jesus the Good Shepherd when Jesus spoke of suffering and death. In Mark's gospel, Peter argued with the other disciples about who was the greatest and who would be greatest in the coming kingdom. In John's gospel, Peter was unwilling to take the place of a servant at their Passover celebration, and he didn't want Jesus to be a servant either. That's why these words in 1 Peter 5 jumped out at me today. I realize Peter is a changed person whose view of leadership has been radically transformed from the gospel scenes. His perspective has embraced the wisdom of Jesus, who encouraged Peter to shepherd the flock. The chosen student needed time to grow into leadership. Don't we all? May we all humbly accept the calling that God has for us, and keep Peter's urgings to the elders and the youth in mind as we grow. Think about where God is calling you.

