

JULY 2, 2023
FIFTH SUNDAY
AFTER PENTECOST



Freed by God's undeserved kindness.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

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

Sunday	Matthew 10:40-42	Receiving and serving others
Monday	Jeremiah 28:5-9	Hananiah opposes Jeremiah
Tuesday	Romans 6:12-23	Slaves of righteousness
Wednesday	2 Timothy 1:8-14	Relying on the power of God
Thursday	Ephesians 2:1-10	From death to life
Friday	2 Corinthians 12:1-10	Paul's visions
Saturday	Psalms 89:1-4, 15-18	God's covenant with David
Sunday	Matthew 11:16-19, 25-30	Rest for the weary

SCRIPTURE VERSE FOR THIS WEEK

For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace. **Romans 6:14 (NRSV)**

PRAYERS AND BLESSING

A Prayer for the Week:

Gracious God, your loving commitment to us goes far beyond what we can imagine; give us faith to trust your never-failing love through Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.

Mealtime Prayer:

Dear God, help us to give thanks for this food so that we can receive this meal with a humble heart through our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

A Blessing to Give:

May the God of love and faithfulness give you joy.



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HYMN OF THE WEEK

*There's a Wideness in
God's Mercy*



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:

- When is a time you received something that you felt you did not deserve?
- When is a time you recognized God's unconditional love in your life?

DEVOTIONS

Read: Romans 6:12-23.

In this reading, God's grace—God's undeserved kindness—is under attack. Paul is responding to those who think his message encourages us to sin. He knows God's goodness does not lead us to sin and writes, "*Sin will have no dominion*" (v. 14) meaning sin will not be your master. For those who think God's grace leads to sinfulness, Paul's response is simple: "No way!" Earlier in chapter 6 he uses the image of life and death to reject such thinking. We have died to sin so we cannot continue to live in sin. Paul then uses the imagery of slavery, either a slave of sin or of God's righteousness. We are freed from being slaves of sin. Our lives are controlled by all that is right and good through Christ, our true Lord (v. 23). Paul acknowledges the difficulty to grasp all this and moves on to the real point for our lives in Christ. It is to be set free by a relationship to God for sanctification, that is, a holy life set apart for God that leads to eternal life.

Discuss: How does God's undeserved kindness set you free to love God and others?

Pray: **Dear God, your constant love is more than we can imagine. Set us free to enjoy your goodness with love for you and for all you have created through Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.**

SERVICE

Jesus calls us to serve our neighbor in love. Based on the Daily Bible Readings for this week, how might you serve others with hospitality?

RITUALS AND TRADITIONS

Hospitality is the practice of treating guests in a friendly and generous way. It includes the spirit in which it is given. Jesus said that anyone who welcomed one of his followers and gave them something even small, such as a cup of cool water, would be rewarded (Matthew 10:42). Put an empty water jug or pitcher on the table. Think or talk about ways you can serve and help others. For each way you name, pour a cup of water into the jug. Finish with this prayer: **Lord Jesus, thank you for serving us. Make us ready to serve others, in big and small ways. Amen.**



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