

Grow, Pray, Study for the Week of October 12, 2025

Weekly Prayer

God of life and renewal, you call us to lives of purpose built not on success or certainty, but on a love that heals, restores, and sets free. When we chase happiness and come up empty, remind us that you desire something deeper: that we would be fully alive — to your presence, to one another, and to the beauty of this world you so deeply love. Give us compassion that acts, hope that persists, and joy that is rooted in your Spirit. In the name of Jesus, the Resurrection and the Life, Amen.

Monday, October 13

Scripture: John 11:1-6a

A certain man, Lazarus, was ill. He was from Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. (This was the Mary who anointed the Lord with fragrant oil and wiped his feet with her hair. Her brother Lazarus was ill.) So the sisters sent word to Jesus, saying, “Lord, the one whom you love is ill. When he heard this, Jesus said, “This illness isn’t fatal. It’s for the glory of God so that God’s Son can be glorified through it.” Jesus loved Martha, her sister, and Lazarus. When he heard that Lazarus was ill, he stayed where he was.

Observation

This chapter opens as Jesus receives word that his friend is ill. But for two days, he waits. Jesus doesn’t rush. His timing confuses everyone. Mary and Martha are waiting, grieving, wondering if they’ve been forgotten. The disciples were likely confused, too, wondering why they weren’t rushing to the village of Bethany.

Application

God does not always act as we expect. In these times, we might feel as if God is absent. We, too, might feel grief, anger, or confusion. But what if, when life stalls or plans fall apart, our purpose has not disappeared, but is *ripening*? What if God is at work in our waiting? In our wanting? In our grief? Ask: *What might God be forming in me as I wait?* Even in delay, your life has meaning.

Prayer

God of patient love, when I can’t see progress, remind me that you are still at work. Teach me to trust your slow miracles. Amen.

Tuesday, October 14

Scripture: John 11:35

Jesus began to cry.

Observation

This is the shortest verse in all of scripture. In the KJV it reads as just two words: “Jesus wept.” One of my confirmation classmates thought themselves clever, when choosing

this verse as their confirmation memory verse — it is only two words! How simple! But consider its meaning. *Jesus wept*. Standing at the grave of his friend, Jesus cried. This has been for me an impactful image. Because Jesus doesn't stand apart from suffering — he joins it. He isn't above our human grief and pain; he embodies it. Jesus' tears reveal that his purpose includes compassionate presence and love.

Application

Our flourishing includes space for lament. Living with purpose doesn't mean we must always feel happy. And it doesn't guarantee it, either. Instead, living with purpose looks like living into the fullness of who God created us to be. And sometimes, that includes our tears. But even then? God is with us in grief. When you hurt, you don't need to hide your pain. When you grieve, you don't need to hide your tears. Tears can be a form of prayer. Ask: *Where might I let myself feel what I've been avoiding, trusting that God meets me there?*

Prayer

Jesus, thank you for being a God who cries with us. Help me see that my emotions aren't weakness — they're signs of your image in me. Amen.

Wednesday, October 15

Scripture: John 11:38-43

Jesus was deeply disturbed again when he came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone covered the entrance. Jesus said, "Remove the stone." Martha, the sister of the dead man, said, "Lord, the smell will be awful! He's been dead four days." Jesus replied, "Didn't I tell you that if you believe, you will see God's glory?" So they removed the stone. Jesus looked up and said, "Father, thank you for hearing me. I know you always hear me. I say this for the benefit of the crowd standing here so that they will believe that you sent me." Having said this, Jesus shouted with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!"

Observation

Read the final verse again: "Jesus shouted with a loud voice, 'Lazarus, come out!'" Jesus speaks clearly into the tomb and calls Lazarus by name. He isn't speaking in generalities, *hey you!* Jesus *knows* Lazarus and calls him by name. Later in John's Gospel (John 20:11-18), Jesus will stand at another tomb and speak a name. This time, the tomb will be his own. And the name he calls is Mary's. Mary is distressed at the death of Jesus. She looks into the tomb and sees emptiness, death, and fear. But Jesus — he stands at the tomb and calls out her name: Mary. Jesus calls us, by name, into new life, new relationship, new ways of being.

Application

Imagine God calling your name — not to demand, but to delight in you. Purpose begins in relationship, not in a checklist. We are not defined by what we do but by whose love

calls us into being. Ask: *What if my purpose today is simply to respond to that love — to come alive where I am?*

Prayer

Loving God, thank you for knowing my name. Call me out of the tomb, out of darkness and fear, and into the wide space of your everlasting love. Amen.

Thursday, October 16

Scripture: John 11:43-44

Having said this, Jesus shouted with a loud voice, “Lazarus, come out!” The dead man came out, his feet bound and his hands tied, and his face covered with a cloth. Jesus said to them, “Untie him and let him go.”

Observation

As a pastor, I have a lot of favorite Bible verses. You probably do, too, right? Verses that spark and inspire something within us, that remind us of our purpose and place in God’s family. These are two of those verses for me. First, Jesus calls Lazarus *by name*, out of the tomb and into new life. He raises Lazarus from the dead. What power! What love! But then, notice that the story isn’t finished. Now, Jesus turns to the community: to Mary and Martha, to the disciples, to all those gathered at the tomb. And Jesus invites *them* to unbind Lazarus. While Jesus brought Lazarus to new life, this work is not done in isolation. Lazarus *needs* his community. Jesus calls *us* to participate here. Lazarus cannot unbind himself, he needs the help of those around him.

Application

Resurrection isn’t solitary. Lazarus needed others to help unwrap the gravecloths. God’s purpose always includes community — helping one another be unbound. Ask: *Who helps me come alive?* and *Who might God be calling me to help set free?* Purpose grows when we practice compassion, justice, and shared liberation.

Prayer

God of community, thank you for the people who unbind me with grace. Show me how to join your work of setting others free. Amen.

Friday, October 17

Scripture: John 11:17-27

When Jesus arrived, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days. Bethany was a little less than two miles from Jerusalem. Many Jews had come to comfort Martha and Mary after their brother’s death. When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went to meet him, while Mary remained in the house. Martha said to Jesus, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother wouldn’t have died. Even now I know that whatever you ask God, God will give you.” Jesus told her, “Your brother will rise again.” Martha replied, “I know that he will rise in the resurrection on the last day.”

Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me will live, even though they die. Everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?” She replied, “Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Christ, God’s Son, the one who is coming into the world.”

Observation

“*Lord, if you had been here.*” I’ve always felt these words to be so relatable. How many times have you wondered this? Lord, if you had been here... my loved one wouldn’t have died. My finances wouldn’t be such a mess. My relationships would not be broken. My life might not be so hard. Our world might not be so broken. I hear, in these words, a deep longing and ache for the world to be another way... for the world to know *God’s way*.

Application

One of our goals at Messiah, is to be a people who “fill the gap” — closing that space between the *way the world is* and the *way God desires it to be*. We seek to be a people who hear the cries, “Lord if you had been here” — and commit to making a difference. Jesus doesn’t promise comfort, he promises life. Happiness rises and falls, but resurrection life runs deeper — it’s hope that breathes even in sorrow. Purpose, then, isn’t a feeling — it’s participation in that living hope. Jesus invites you and me to be a people of hope. Ask: *Where can I choose life today, even if I don’t feel happy?* Maybe it’s showing up, forgiving someone, creating beauty, or simply breathing in gratitude.

Prayer

God of life, teach me to seek more than happiness. Help me to live with courage, compassion, and love — even when joy feels far away. Amen.

Saturday, October 18

Scripture: John 11:4

When he heard this, Jesus said, “This illness isn’t fatal. It’s for the glory of God so that God’s Son can be glorified through it.”

Observation:

St Irenaeus, a second-century Christian bishop and theologian, said, “The glory of God is a human being fully alive.” The raising of Lazarus reveals that God’s glory is not distant or abstract — it’s found in human aliveness. The goodness of God is found in you, in our church, in our community and world. When we are *fully alive*, that is, fully living into the people God has created us to be, we reflect the glory of God. Our purpose is to be part of that divine flourishing: to live, love, create, and heal.

Application

Matthew 5:16 declares, “Let your light so shine before others, that they see your good works and glorify God in heaven.” This verse is often said as part of our baptismal blessings and prayers. A reminder that when we look around and wonder *What is my purpose?* or *Where is God?* that often, the answer rests with us. God is with you, right

now, in this very moment. And God has called you to shine a light, share love, and live as those unbound and set free. Ask: *What helps me feel most alive in God?* Maybe it's caring for creation, standing up for others, making art, or resting deeply. Your aliveness is not selfish — it's part of God's dream for the world.

Prayer

God of abundance, call me into full, radiant life. Let my living reflect your love and widen the world's joy. Amen.