

5th Sunday after Pentecost

June 26, 2023–
July 2, 2023

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 10:34–42

THEME: The Christian Loves God Above All

SONG: CW21 704/ CW93 452– Let Us Ever Walk with Jesus

VISUAL: A favorite food (a sandwich, cookie, chips, etc.)

OBJECT LESSON

Begin by telling the children about the favorite food. Show it to them and describe it—the smell, taste, texture. Then emphasize that you LOVE this food. It pleases you greatly anytime you have this food. Ask the children if they have a favorite food. Ask them to close their eyes and picture it and remember a time when they tasted it. Talk about how while you love this food, it isn't the most important thing in your life and that you love other things and people more than you love this food.

BIBLE TRUTH

In our Bible reading today, Jesus tells us something that can be very difficult. He tells us that out of everything and everyone, we are to love God the most. More than our favorite food, our favorite pet, our favorite friend or relative. More than everything! Even though it is good to love good things, sometimes those good things become the most important things in our lives. When that happens, it is a sin. It is a sin when we love our friends more than God, our pets, our extra activities—anything that we put first in our hearts.

But here's the good news: Jesus put his Father first, and what his Father wanted was you. Jesus had his priorities straight. Not once did he put something above his Father's will. He knew when he came to this earth what was most important and because of his sacrificial life and death, we share in the resurrection he won for us.

DISCUSSION AND APPLICATIONS

What is a good thing you put above God? What are some ways we can help fellow believers see that it looks like their priorities are mixed up—that they aren't putting God first?

PRAYER

Dear Heavenly Father, thank you for giving us all the good things in our lives. You are the creator of all things and you bless us with them. Sometimes we look at what you have created and put it in a place higher than you. Forgive us and help us to always keep you as number one in our hearts. For Jesus' sake we pray. Amen.



HEART IMPRINTS

6th Sunday after Pentecost

July 3, 2023-
July 9, 2023

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 11:25-30

THEME: The Christian Finds Rest in Jesus

SONG: CW21 818 - My Soul Finds Rest in God Alone
(Psalm 62)

VISUAL: Dumbell

OBJECT LESSON

Begin by doing some reps of an exercise (bicep curl, bench press, etc.) with the dumbbell (if you don't have access to a dumbbell, this would work with push ups or tricep dips as well). Maybe have the children count with you. When you have done a few, exaggerate how tired you are and say, "I need a rest." Ask the children if they have had a time in their lives when they have needed a rest. Maybe it was after a track meet. Maybe after recess or P.E. Maybe they needed a mental break after a hard exam or test. It is good to take rests.

BIBLE TRUTH

We need physical and mental rest. We also need spiritual rest. But spiritual rest is different. We sin every day. Don't you get tired of that? I try not to lie or be mean to my friend or do something I'm not supposed to, and yet I still do those things. It makes me tired. And then I look at the sin in the world around me—sickness, disasters, bad news. It makes me tired. Where can I find rest in this sinful world?

Jesus has the answer. He wants us to come to him. He wants us to learn from him. He wants to show us his love and reveal to us all the goodness he is. He has taken the burden of our sins on himself. All our sins were paid for by Jesus on the cross. He gives us the forgiveness he has won through his Word and sacraments. He wants to remind us of heaven and how it is waiting for us. How he has prepared a room for us. Jesus knows all the troubles we face in this life and he invites us to lay those troubles on him. He already has saved us from them and we can find peace and rest in him.

DISCUSSION AND APPLICATIONS

What is a way we can lay our burdens on Jesus? Discuss prayer and the importance of it. What is a way we can comfort someone and help them find peace and spiritual rest?

PRAYER

Dear Jesus, thank you for giving us rest. Thank you for knowing every trouble we face and reminding us of the good news that you have taken everything bad and broken and made it new again. Help us remember to come to you for spiritual rest and keep us close to you until we reach heaven where our rest will be complete. In your name we pray. Amen.



HEART IMPRINTS

7th Sunday after Pentecost

July 10, 2023 -
July 16, 2023

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23

THEME: The Christian is Planted by the Word

SONG: CW21 644/ CW93 324 - Almighty God, Your Word is Cast

VISUAL: Some seeds

OBJECT LESSON

Show the seeds. Have you ever planted a seed before? A lot of things can happen to that seed that will prevent it from being fruitful. A bird or squirrel could come and take it away. The soil could be deficient in some way. Weeds could grow up around it and take all the nutrients. With all the things that could go wrong with planting the seed, it is amazing when the seed does have the right soil, takes root, grows, and produces a tasty fruit or vegetable or a beautiful flower.

BIBLE TRUTH

The seed is the Word. Many things try to take the Word away from us and keep it from creating faith in us. The devil tries to prevent us from hearing the Word or taking it to heart. He tries to distract us by trying to make us want good things God gives us more than God himself. He tries to get us to doubt God's Word like Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden.

God is almighty and his Word is powerful. God used his mighty Word to create the world. And God uses his mighty Word to save people. How amazing is it that the words of the Bible grant us everlasting life. It is a miracle. A miracle of God's grace and power that his Word creates faith in our hearts. There are so many things in our lives that feel so powerful—but God and his Word are more powerful. And God has blessed all of you with his Word so that you may bless others with it.

DISCUSSION AND APPLICATIONS

Name ways we can gain good roots for our faith. What are ways we can share our faith with others? What are things we can watch out for that may distract us from God's Word and his goodness?

PRAYER

Dear Almighty God, you are all powerful. You are all knowing. You have used your Word to grant faith to all of us here. Continue to strengthen our faith and let us spread that seed of the gospel to everyone we know, that they may share in the wonderful gift of heaven with us. Amen.



HEART IMPRINTS

8th Sunday after Pentecost

July 17, 2023 -
July 23, 2023

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43

THEME: The Christian Lives as Wheat Among Weeds

SONG: CW21 491/ CW93 613 - Come, You Thankful People, Come

VISUAL: Trail mix

OBJECT LESSON

Eat some trail mix, but take out one part of the mix each time you grab a few (like take out the raisins). I really like trail mix, but I really don't like raisins so I take them out. I don't always know if anyone will eat them, so they might end up going in the garbage.

BIBLE TRUTH

In our scripture lesson today, Jesus talks about how God has to take out the weeds like I take out these raisins. He is talking about judgment day. When judgment day happens, God will have his angels come and take all the sin and evil and put it in hell. Then all believers will be left to enjoy heaven for eternity. We are all anticipating that great day, but what do we do while we wait? We live as God intended us: as wheat among the weeds.

We are to be faithful, fruitful, and mindful of the end of time. And yet, how often do we speak and act like the weeds? Maybe you have made jokes that weren't very kind or very appropriate. Maybe you have lied to your parents or teachers. Maybe you have cared more about yourself and what you want more than others around you. It's hard to act like wheat when we feel surrounded by weeds.

But thankfully, it isn't up to us to act like wheat for our salvation. We are already wheat! The Holy Spirit put faith in our heart and God planted us as wheat. He chose us to be his children. He gave us life, when we were on the path to the fiery furnace. So what do we do when we act like weeds? We repent. And we bask in the forgiveness given to us. And we keep reflecting God's love out of thankfulness.

DISCUSSION AND APPLICATIONS

Define repentance. Talk about situations where we can act like wheat in the midst of weeds.

PRAYER

Dear heavenly father, thank you for making us wheat. Help us to shine for you among the weeds and hasten the day when we will shine like the sun in your kingdom. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.



HEART IMPRINTS

9th Sunday after Pentecost

July 24, 2023–
July 30, 2023

SCRIPTURE: 1 Kings 3:5–12

THEME: The Christian Seeks Spiritual Wealth

SONG: CW21 827/ CW93 443 – Rejoice, My Heart, Be Glad and Sing

VISUAL: Something you really wanted as a kid (or a picture of it)

OBJECT LESSON

When I was a kid, I really wanted this. Hold up the object. Maybe you have wanted something really badly. Maybe you asked your parents for it for your birthday or Christmas. Maybe you negotiated with your parents about paying for part of it or doing extra chores around the house to earn it. Maybe you waited months to save up to get it. Maybe you even sacrificed something else on your wishlist to get this one special thing. You made that special thing a priority over everything else on your wishlist.

BIBLE TRUTH

Today we are talking about spiritual wealth. Spiritual wealth puts faith in Jesus above everything else. We have a lot of good things in our lives—family, friends, toys, extracurricular activities, pets, health—the list goes on and on. But the most important part of our life is our faith in Jesus as our savior. I know I don't always make that the most important part of my life. I put spending time with my family in front of spending time with God in his Word. I put my desires for toys or gadgets in front of my desire for knowing Jesus more. These things are good things, and yet I get my priorities mixed up. We all do. That is why King Solomon asked for a discerning heart—to be able to see when the priorities were mixed up. And still, even with a discerning heart, he was not perfect.

But here is good news: Jesus did not get his priorities mixed up. He was perfect. For us. He knew how to build up spiritual wealth. He knew he would have to sacrifice something to put us right with God. And that something was his life. He devoted his whole life to living perfectly and then he gave up that life to God so we could have eternal wealth.

DISCUSSION AND APPLICATIONS

What are ways we can seek spiritual wealth first? Discuss how to prioritize faith over the other good things in our lives.

PRAYER

Dear Jesus, thank you for putting us first. Thank you for sacrificing yourself so we could have eternal blessings and wealth with you in heaven. In your name we pray. Amen.



HEART IMPRINTS

10th Sunday after Pentecost

July 31, 2023 -
Aug. 6, 2023

SCRIPTURE: 1 Kings 17:1-6

THEME: The Christian Trusts God to Provide

SONG: CW21 603/ CW93 236 - All Praise to God Who Reigns Above

VISUAL: Lunch box with a single cracker in it

OBJECT LESSON

I asked my spouse to pack my lunch today. Let's see what is inside. Open the lunchbox to reveal the single cracker. Look surprised. What? This is not an adequate lunch for a human. This isn't even an adequate lunch for a parrot. I trusted my spouse to pack my lunch and now I will be hungry the rest of the day.

BIBLE TRUTH

Sometimes when life is going well, it is easy to trust God. When our lunch box is full, it's easy to trust God. But if our lunch box is close to empty, it isn't so easy. When times get tough in our lives, we need to trust God the most, and it is also the hardest. When it seems like our family is being torn apart. When we fail at something that is really important to us. When school is hard. We stop trusting that God is good. We stop trusting in God and his love for us.

But God still provides. Even when we don't trust him, he still takes care of us. But because he provides for us, he invites us to trust him. Sometimes, he provides through miracles, like the way Elijah was fed by ravens. Ravens! Birds came and gave him food. And that is just our Scripture lesson for today. Think about all the other places in Scripture where God provides in miraculous ways. He gave manna and quail to the Israelites in the desert. Jesus fed 5,000 men with five loaves of bread and two fish. God usually provides through natural ways. He gives your parents jobs to buy food and a house and clothes and cars. God loves you. He cares about you. He provides for you. You can trust in him to provide in any situation.

DISCUSSION AND APPLICATIONS

What are good ways to remind yourself that God continually loves you and provides for you, even in the toughest times? What is an example in your life or in the life of someone you know when God has provided?

PRAYER

Dear heavenly Father, you give us everything we have. You take care of us. You provide for us. We doubt you and your love. Forgive us and strengthen our faith. Help us to trust you completely and remind us daily all the blessings you bestow on us. Amen.



HEART IMPRINTS

11th Sunday after Pentecost

Aug. 7, 2023-
Aug. 13, 2023

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 14:22-33

THEME: The Christian Answers Doubt with Faith

SONG: CW21 832 Immovable Our Hope Remains

VISUAL: A toy boat that will float and a small tub of water

OBJECT LESSON

Raise your hand if you think this toy boat will float in this water. Think carefully! Are you absolutely certain it will? What if there is a hole in the boat that you can't see? What if the boat isn't balanced and it will tip over? What if I cheat and push the boat under the water? Do you still think this toy boat will float in this water? Put the toy boat in the water so that it will float. See how easy it is to doubt?

BIBLE TRUTH

In our scripture lesson today, Peter doubts Jesus. We might look at this account and say, "Well if I were Peter, I certainly wouldn't have doubted Jesus." But let's step aside from trying to be better than Peter and see if we have doubted Jesus ourselves. Have you ever been afraid? When I was a child, I was frightened of the dark. Have you ever thought that maybe God didn't really mean not to lie, just not to lie in a really bad way? That's doubt. Have you ever thought that God wasn't with you? That is doubting God's promises. We all do that. What is the solution? How can we be saved from our doubt?

Notice Jesus' response in this instance. He doesn't yell at Peter and say, "You should know better!" He doesn't let Peter drown to scare the others into believing in him more. No, he catches Peter. Immediately. And that's what Jesus does every time we doubt him. He catches us. He sees our weakening faith in the midst of our doubt and he directs us again to his promises. He reminds us in his Word of his saving acts of mercy and power. He sets us back on our feet and gently reminds us that he is the one carrying us and we need not fear or doubt him.

DISCUSSION AND APPLICATIONS

Think of some times when you have doubted God. What are some Bible passages you can turn to when you are doubting God's promises?

PRAYER

Dear Jesus, you have done miraculous works. You have healed many. You have walked on water. You are all powerful. We often doubt that power. Forgive us and strengthen our faith that we may not doubt, but continually trust in you. In your name we pray. Amen.



HEART IMPRINTS