

22nd Sunday
after Pentecost
Reformation
Oct. 23, 2023–
Oct. 29, 2023

SCRIPTURE: Daniel 6:10–12, 16–23

THEME: A Time for Steadfast Faith

SONG: CW21 863/ CW93 200 – A Mighty Fortress
CW21 862/ CW93 203 – Lord, Keep Us Steadfast

VISUAL: a child volunteer; a large stuffed animal with a sign around its neck that says “Trouble”; something sturdy for the child to hold onto; the word “stedefæst” ready to display on poster board or a screen

OBJECT LESSON

Ask for a volunteer to come forward and stand on one foot. Show the large stuffed animal, and read the sign around its neck saying “trouble.” Ask the children if they think you could use the animal named “Trouble” to push the child and make the child have to put the other foot down to keep from falling.

Now have the child hold onto a sturdy object while standing on one foot. Ask, “Would Trouble be able to push your friend down as easily now?” Explain that holding onto the sturdy object made their friend more steadfast. The word steadfast traces back to the Old English word *stedefæst* (display this word), a combination of *stede*, meaning “place,” and *fæst*, meaning “firmly fixed.” Steadfast is a word that means “firmly in place.”

BIBLE TRUTH

In today’s Bible story, we are going to hear how the prophet Daniel was steadfast. Listen to find out what a king’s decree was, and what Daniel did when he heard about the new law.

Read Daniel 6:10-12.

What was the king’s law? What would happen to anyone who disobeyed? But what did Daniel continue to do? Even though the law said that no one could pray to anyone but the king, Daniel kept praying to God. He knew that if he did this, he would probably die a terrible death, being eaten by lions. But Daniel remained steadfast—he kept praying to God, three times a day, right where he always had. His faith in God and time in prayer were more important to him than anything else! Let’s find out what happened next.

Read verses 16-23.

What did God do for Daniel?

DISCUSSION AND APPLICATIONS

God wants us to stay steadfast in our faith, even when troubles come. This means that when bad things happen—and they will—we will still believe that God loves us and Jesus saved us, and we will keep praying to him.

Remember how “Trouble” made your friend’s balance more shaky? What are some troubles that could make a Christian’s faith get more “shaky”? (The children might name troubles like losing a friend, being seriously hurt or ill, the death of someone they are close to, and so on.)

When “Trouble” came to your friend, he/she was able to stay more steadfast by holding onto something. What can we Christians hold onto when troubles come? (Jesus and his saving work; God’s promises to love and care for us; his Word which never fails) We can’t stay steadfast on our own. But who works in our hearts to strengthen our faith with God’s Word? (the Holy Spirit)

God the Holy Spirit will strengthen your faith whenever you hear God’s Word. Let’s listen to that Word often so that, no matter what troubles come into our lives, we can be like Daniel and stay steadfast in our faith!

PRAYER

Dear God, you had the power to protect Daniel from the lions, and you can help us with all our troubles too. Whenever we have troubles, send the Holy Spirit to keep us steadfast in our faith. Remind us that you love us and that Jesus saved us, and lead us to keep praying to you. Amen.



**HEART
IMPRINTS**

23rd Sunday after Pentecost

Oct. 30, 2023–
Nov. 5, 2023

SCRIPTURE: Revelation 7:9–17
THEME: A Time to Focus on Future Glory

SONG: CW21 885 /CW93 727 – There Is a Higher Throne

VISUAL: picture of an athlete who would be well-known to many of the children, such as an Olympic gold-medalist or the quarterback of their nearest NFL team; barbells or other weights; an arm sling, an ankle wrap, and/or a “boot” worn for a leg injury

OBJECT LESSON

Show the picture of an athlete, and ask the children to identify the person.

Was this athlete born incredibly good at this sport? Or do you think this athlete had to work at it? (The athlete had to work hard to get good at the sport.) What do you think the athlete did to get good enough to win/make the team? (Show barbells or other weights to cue, and talk about long hours of practice, giving up other activities.) Were pain and troubles probably part of the training? (Show the arm sling, ankle wrap, or boot to cue, pointing out that most athletes get injured sometime and need to work through that to get good again.)

Why would an athlete do all that hard work, sacrifice so much, and even risk lots of injuries to become great at a sport? Point out that they are working hard for future rewards and glory.

BIBLE TRUTH

While the Apostle John was still living on this earth, Jesus let him look into heaven. Jesus told John to write down what he saw, and that became the book we call Revelation. Today we’re going to hear part of what John wrote in that book. Read Revelation 7:9-14.

John saw a great multitude of people in heaven. Where were the people from? (all over the world) One of the elders there told John that these were people who had come out of the great tribulation. Tribulation means “great trouble or suffering.” Where had these people gone through a lot of suffering? (on earth) John was seeing people from all over the world who had gone through many troubles and a lot of suffering while they lived on earth. But now they were in heaven. Why were they in heaven? (they had been washed in the blood of the Lamb, Jesus) Let’s hear how heaven is described. Read verses 15-17.

What never happens in heaven? (People never get hungry or thirst or too hot, and they never cry.)

DISCUSSION AND APPLICATIONS

Before someone receives the rewards and the glory of being a world-class, professional athlete, that person will probably need to go through a lot of hard work and hardships, or troubles. But if they truly want to be the best athlete they can be, they will keep their eyes and their thoughts on their goal, and do what it takes to get there. Will we all have troubles and suffering here on earth? What kinds of troubles, or hardships, might we have? Sometimes when we are suffering or going through a lot of hard things, it’s hard to remember that someday we will be in heaven. Will there be any troubles there? Will we ever cry or be hurt?

When you have hardships and suffering here on earth, it is helpful for you to think about heaven and why you have heaven. Keep your eyes and your thoughts on the goal and what Jesus has done so that you have that goal. No matter how bad things get for you here, all your troubles will end on the day you go to heaven. Remember that no matter what you need to go through here, it will all be worth it in the end, when you are with Jesus in glory.

PRAYER

Dear Jesus, thank you for going through the hardships of suffering and dying here on earth so that we can go to heaven someday! When we have troubles here on earth, help us think about heaven and how wonderful it will be to be with you there. Amen.



HEART IMPRINTS

24th Sunday after Pentecost

Nov. 6, 2023–
Nov. 12, 2023

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 25:1-13

THEME: A Time for Watchfulness

SONG: CW21 713 - I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light

VISUAL: older child to be a volunteer; wrapping paper and a gift box; a boxed cake mix; and a toy or game

OBJECT LESSON

Have a volunteer (an older child) pretend to be your child. Explain that you are going to be acting out a story with your “child.” Tell the child “I have a project I have to do at work today, but sometime this afternoon, as soon as I get it done, we’re going to Grandma’s to celebrate her birthday. Please wrap this gift for her and bake this cake for her before then.”

Tell the child to imagine that he or she wants to do something else for a while first. Have the child walk away and play with a toy or game. Ask the other children, “What might happen if my child waits to wrap the gift or bake the cake until the middle of the afternoon, and I come home early in the afternoon?” Point out that waiting to do a job can mean that you won’t be ready when you need to be.

BIBLE TRUTH

My “child” in our story didn’t know when the parent would come home and take them to Grandma’s house. Today in God’s Word we hear a story Jesus told that is a bit like that. Jesus’ story was about ten virgins, young women, who didn’t know when the groom would be coming to start a wedding celebration. They had to be ready for him to come at any time. Let’s hear Jesus’ story.

Read Matthew 25:1-13.

How many of the virgins were ready when the groom came? (five) The other five weren’t ready, so they missed the wedding.

Jesus ended by telling us that we need to “keep watch,” because we don’t know the day or the hour that something is going to happen. Who is going to come back to earth, ready to take us to heaven? Do we know when he is coming? We need to be ready at all times.

DISCUSSION AND APPLICATIONS

What happened when the child waited to get ready to go to Grandma’s? What happened to the five virgins who weren’t ready for the groom? What will happen if we aren’t ready for Jesus to come back?

If we aren’t ready for Jesus, we won’t go to heaven. That’s a scary thought, but being ready means just one thing: We need to have faith—to believe in Jesus as our Savior. And we don’t even go out and find faith for ourselves; the Holy Spirit gives us faith!

We do have the ability to reject the Holy Spirit, though. Some people say, “I’ll think about reading God’s Word and believing in Jesus when I’m older. Right now I just want to have fun!” What might happen to a person who waits to get ready for Jesus? (They could die before they think they will, or Jesus could come back at any time, and they won’t be ready.)

The time to “keep watch” is now! Let’s not wait to love Jesus and believe in him as our Savior. The Holy Spirit is working faith in Jesus in your hearts right now, as you hear God’s Word. That’s what makes you ready!

PRAYER

Dear Jesus, we are glad that you are coming back sometime to take us to heaven, even though we don’t know when that will be. Help us to be watchful, rather than getting distracted by things in this world. Send your Holy Spirit to make our faith stronger so that we will be ready when you come. Amen.



HEART IMPRINTS

25th Sunday after Pentecost

Nov. 13, 2023–
Nov. 19, 2023

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 25:14–30
THEME: A Time for Faithful Service

SONG: CW21 751 /CW93 481 – O God, Your Hand the
Heavens Made

VISUAL: eight different types of seed packets to grow
vegetables (alternative: eight small mailing envelopes, each
labeled with a different vegetable name and picture); three
volunteers to represent siblings of different ages

OBJECT LESSON

Ask for three volunteers, and have the children pretend that they are siblings (brothers and sisters). You are their grandparent going away for the summer. You want them to take care of your vegetable garden while you are gone.

Hand five seed packets to the oldest child. Give the middle child three packets, and give the youngest child one seed packet to plant. Tell all the children that you want them to plant their seeds and take care of the vegetables until you get back. Ask why you might have given five packets to the oldest child, three to the middle child, and only one to the youngest child. Point out that it makes sense to give the person with the most abilities the most to do. Ask what you should find when you come back at the end of summer.

BIBLE TRUTH

In today's Bible lesson, Jesus tells a story about a man who was going away and gave his three servants a job to do, each according to his ability.

Read Matthew 25:14-23.

When two servants used their abilities well, and earned more gold for the man, how did he feel? Now let's read what happened with the third servant.

Read Matthew 25:24-30.

How did the man feel when the third servant didn't use his abilities to earn more gold?

DISCUSSION AND APPLICATIONS

Remember my story about the grandparent leaving seed packets with his or her grandchildren? Imagine that the youngest child didn't plant his vegetable seeds. Would anything grow? Would the grandparent be happy if he

came back at the end of the summer, and the youngest child's seed packet still wasn't even opened?

Just like in that story and in the Bible story about the man who gave his servants jobs to do, God has given each of us gifts and abilities. (Ask the children to name some abilities they have, such as being able to read or write, being good friends, cheering people up, singing, and so on.) God is unhappy when we don't use the abilities he has given us to serve him.

God wants us to use the abilities he has given us to do the job of making his kingdom grow until Jesus comes back. (Ask the children to help think of ways they could use the abilities they named before to make God's kingdom grow. For example, singing could be used to praise God. Being a good friend could help a child invite a friend to come to church Sunday school. Telling someone about Jesus; showing kindness to someone in need; delivering a devotion book to someone.)

While we are here on earth, waiting for Jesus' return, God is happy when we use our gifts and abilities to serve him.

PRAYER

Dear God, thank you for giving each of us different abilities. Forgive us for the times we haven't used the abilities you have given us to serve you. Help us use the abilities we have to serve you while we are here on earth, waiting for Jesus' return. We pray in his name. Amen.



HEART IMPRINTS

25th Sunday after Pentecost

Nov. 13, 2023–
Nov. 19, 2023

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 25:31–40

THEME: A Time Yearn for the End

SONG: CW21 493 /CW93 7 – Rejoice, Rejoice, Believers
St. 1,3,4

VISUAL: volunteers who have never been to a Disney theme park; real or pretend microphone

OBJECT LESSON

Ask the children who has never been to Disney but wants to go someday. Have some of those children come to the front, and tell them that they are going to do some imagining.

Tell the children to imagine that you are a TV news reporter who has just told them that they have won a vacation to a theme park that is like Disney, only better. It's a place where everyone is happy and has fun, the food is great, the rides are exciting, and they can do whatever they want. Using a real or pretend microphone, interview them about how they would feel. Are they excited? Is it hard to wait? Have the children show you how excited they would be!

BIBLE TRUTH

In the Bible passage we'll read today, Jesus tells us about a day that we will get to go someplace even better than the best theme park in the world!

Read Matthew 25:31-33.

Jesus is talking about when he will come again. That day will be the last day that this world exists. Do you know what we call that day? On Judgment Day, Jesus will come with his angels, and he will put on his right side the people who believed in him as our Savior. Do you believe that Jesus is your Savior? Then you will be on Jesus' right side! Listen to how he describes the place where he will take us.

Read Matthew 25:34.

Where is Jesus going to take us? Jesus is talking about heaven! It's a place that God prepared for us when he created the world.

Read Matthew 25:35-40.

Jesus describes how the believers showed their love for him on earth. What were some of the things they did out of love for Jesus? When we help other people because we love Jesus, it is as if we were doing those things for Jesus himself. That's

not how we get into heaven, but it is how we show that we have faith in Jesus as our Savior and love him.

DISCUSSION AND APPLICATIONS

Earlier we imagined a place that was like Disney, only better—a special theme park. You all seemed pretty excited about the idea of going there. It would be hard to wait, right?

Which do you think is better: a special theme park, or heaven? Heaven is much, much better than any place we could go on earth. What will heaven be like? (Emphasize how wonderful heaven will be. We'll always be happy in heaven. We will feel healthy and never get sick or hurt. It will be more beautiful than anything we've ever seen on earth. We'll get to see Jesus with our own eyes.)

(Get out the microphone again, and "interview" children.) How do you feel about going to heaven? Are you excited? Does it seem hard to wait sometimes?

We have to wait to go to heaven until God says it's time. But it's ok to be excited about heaven. It's ok to want very much to go there. The Last Day of this world is going to be a very happy day for all of us who believe in Jesus.

PRAYER

Dear Jesus, thank you for being our Savior and for promising that because you died for us, we can go to heaven. We look forward to being there with you someday. Help us be patient as we wait for that day to come! Amen.

