

Prayer and Study Guide

Daily Scripture Readings – 3/18/18

Prayer - Use the Wesleyan Covenant Prayer to begin your time with God each day.

O Lord, death is scary and mysterious. The death of a loved one is the most painful thing we experience in this life. It can bring us to our knees in despair, but we find hope in the life, death, and resurrection of Your Son, Jesus Christ, who conquered sin and death and rose again on the third day. When we face death help us to cling to the hope You have given us in Your power of resurrection. We pray in the name of our Risen Lord, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Monday – Read Psalm 23 and John 14:1-29. Psalm 23 reminds us that we have hope even when we walk through the darkest valley. This Psalm also gives us the hope that we will dwell in the house of the LORD our whole life long. Jesus promised his disciples that he was going to prepare a place for each of them in his Father's house. Jesus said, "And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also." Jesus gives us the hope that we will be together with Jesus and all of our brothers and sisters in Christ through his power of resurrection. Pray for God to help you share the hope we find in these scriptures with someone you know.

Tuesday – Read Revelation 21:1-7. Over and over again in the scriptures we find that God is with us. "See, the home of God is among mortals. He will dwell with them; they will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them; he will wipe every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; mourning and crying and pain will be no more, for the first things have passed away." God's power of resurrection promises us the end to death and crying and pain. God promises us, "See, I am making all things new." This is the hope we find in resurrection. Pray for how God can use you to offer hope to someone you know who has recently been mourning the death of a loved one.

Wednesday – Read John 11:1-16. Death is a part of life. Each one of us lives through times when one of our beloved friends or family members dies. When a loved one is very sick and facing death, we pray for healing for that person. Many times, God answers our prayers through healing and a return to wellness. Other times, God answers our prayer through the hope we have in God's power of resurrection. Lazarus died, but Jesus was going to demonstrate to Martha and Mary that he is the resurrection and the life. Spend some time praying for healing for the people in our church who are sick or suffering.

Thursday – Read John 11:17-27. Martha had great faith in Jesus. She told him, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask of him." Maybe you have felt the same way at some time. Even as she mourned the death of her brother, Jesus gave Martha hope. He said, "I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die." Do you believe that? When we put our faith in Jesus, we find hope in resurrection. Spend some time thinking and praying about the hope we find in resurrection and the way life triumphs over death.

Friday – Read John 11:28-37. When someone we love dies we may experience great sadness and despair. We may find ourselves overwhelmed with grief. Like Martha, Mary knelt at Jesus' feet and said, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died." When Jesus saw Mary weeping and the people with Mary weeping, he was greatly moved. John tells us that Jesus wept. Jesus loved Mary, Martha, and Lazarus. He felt their pain and joined in their mourning. In our church, one of the ways we share God's love with a grieving family is to mourn with them. We sit with them. We listen to them. We join in remembering the deceased person by telling stories. Spend some time giving thanks to Jesus for his compassion for us.

Saturday – Read John 11:38-45. Jesus is Lord over life and death. When he came to Lazarus' tomb, Jesus thanked God for hearing his prayer. Then he cried, "Lazarus, come out!" The dead man came out, his hands and feet bound with strips of cloth, and his face wrapped in a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Unbind him, and let him go." John tells us that many people believed in Jesus when they saw that he had power over death. How does Jesus' power over death change the way you view your own life and death? We find hope in our belief that those who confess that Jesus is Lord will rise again on the day of resurrection. We find hope in knowing that we will see our loved ones again on that day. Spend some time thanking God for the hope we have in resurrection.

Lectionary Readings: Jeremiah 31:31-34; Psalm 51:-12; Hebrews 5:5-10; John 12:20-33.

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