

Prayer and Study Guide

Daily Scripture Readings – 6/10/18

Prayer - Use this prayer to begin your time with God each day.

Creator God, when you made us you made us very good. You blessed us and gave us dominion over your creation. We confess that we have not loved you with our whole heart.

We have not done your will. We have broken your law, we have rebelled against your love, we have not loved our neighbors, and we have not heard the cry of the needy. Forgive us, we pray. Let your image shine brightly through our lives and help us partner with you to do your will through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Monday – Read Genesis 1:1-5. **In the Beginning.** The Latin phrase *creatio ex nihilo* means *creation from nothing*. In the beginning God created something out of nothing. God creates form from a formless void. God creates light where there had only been darkness. God creates order where there was chaos. This story was addressed to exiles in the sixth century B.C. who experienced chaos as their lives were turned upside down. The Babylonian gods seemed to have defeated the dreams and promises of the God of Israel, but Genesis says that the God of Israel is the Lord of all life. This God can be trusted, even when we experience sickness, poverty, unemployment, loneliness, or abandonment. As you pray, ask God to shine God’s light into your darkness.

Tuesday – Read Genesis 1:3-25 and Psalms 33:4-9; 104:1-35. **God saw that it was good.** Creation was God’s idea, and God is a relational God who is intimately involved in the world and our lives. God creates through speech. When God speaks, that which did not exist comes into being. God says, “Let there be...” and it was so. Every part of God’s creation is good as it leaves the Creator’s hand, and God continues to create beautiful things every day. Spend some time considering the beauty of God’s creation. Where do you see God at work in the world? Where do you see God at work in your life? As you pray, thank God for the goodness and beauty of God’s creation.

Wednesday – Read Genesis 1:26-27, 31 and Psalm 8. **Made in the Image of God.** God made you good. It’s true. In fact, God made you very good. That’s the truth we find in Genesis 1, but it’s not the message we receive in many experiences. You may have been told you that you were not good, but God says that you are very good, and these verses say that both men and women were made in the image of God and are equally valued and loved by God. As you pray, look at yourself in a mirror and try to see yourself the way that God sees you as a precious child made in the very image of God, and then pray these words, “Father God, thank you for making me good.”

Thursday – Read Genesis 1:26-31 and Psalm 8:3-9. **The Gift of Dominion.** God created us to live in a right relationship with God, with each other, and with all of creation. Through the gift of dominion, God makes all of us stewards or caretakers of all of God’s creation. This means that we are partners with God, and God is willing to share some of God’s authority with us. Authority always comes with responsibility. Some scholars point out that *dominion* is actually a royal word. Kings used it to define the span of their control, and to this day, you are still called to partner with God to care for every good gift of God’s creation. As you pray, consider the ways you can please God through exercising dominion.

Friday – Read Genesis 2:1-3 and Exodus 20:8-11. **On the Seventh Day God Rested.** God rested on the seventh day of creation. By resting, God demonstrated the rhythm God intends for us and all of God’s creation. Sabbath rest was so important that God made it the fourth commandment. Do you habitually break the fourth commandment? How do we sometimes contribute to economic systems that cause others to work on the Lord’s Day? Will you make a commitment to observe the Sabbath by Connecting to God in Worship at one of our worship services every Sunday morning? Spend some time thanking God for the rest that God offers to you. Meditate in silence for at least two minutes.

Saturday – Read John 1:1-14. **The Pre-existence of Christ.** “In the beginning” echoes the epic first words of *Genesis*. As a member of the Trinity, Jesus was present and worked to bring creation into existence. We call this the Doctrine of the Pre-existence of Christ. The Son of God existed before Jesus was born in Bethlehem. Jesus is the light, burning with love for all. No darkness can put out that light! In *The Message*, verse 5 reads, “The Life-Light blazed out of the darkness; the darkness couldn’t put it out.” In what ways have you seen darkness try to put out the light in your life? How do you sense that God is with you? As you pray express thanks to God that the light always defeats the darkness.

Lectionary Readings: I Samuel 8:4-20; Psalm 138; II Corinthians 4:13-5:1; Mark 3:20-5.

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