

"Only Human"
September 16, 2018



THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURES

Psalm 6, Psalm 8; Genesis 1:26-30, Psalm 8:5; Luke 7:36-50; Matthew 9:9-13, Luke 23:32-43; Colossians 1:15-23, Ephesians 2:4-6

DAY 1

Read Psalm 6 and Psalm 8

Psalms express the full range of our human emotions, desires, and longings. The Psalms can be sorrowful, grief stricken, joyful, angry, repentant, peaceful, serene, or worshipful. We can find psalms that reflect our spiritual condition no matter where we are on our spiritual journeys and no matter the current circumstances of our lives.

- **Compare and contrast the psalmist's spiritual state based on your reading of Psalm 6 and Psalm 8.**
- **What is your current state of mind and spirit? Is Psalm 6 or Psalm 8 more reflective of how you are feeling today?**
- **When you find yourself in a place of sorrow and lament similar to that of the David in Psalm 6, do you to turn to God with your own lament as David did?**

God accepts our lamentations and our praises. Take time to speak to God with the kind of raw honesty that David offered in today's readings. Praise God's glorious name but also express your sorrows and concerns. God can handle anything you offer.

DAY 2

Read Genesis 1:26-30 and Psalm 8:5

It is an awesome thing indeed to realize that we were created in God's image. It is also a sobering thing to realize how far we often fall from reflecting God's goodness, love, and mercy. Our lives are often like a tug-of-war where we long to demonstrate God's image, while we are constantly tempted by the world's priorities and values.

- **Reflect upon the last few days. Did your words and deeds reflect God's image or do you wish you had done or said some things differently?**
- **Identify a moment when you reflected God's image. How did that make you feel?**
- **Identify a moment when your actions or words reflected the world's priorities rather than God's priorities. What might have changed that moment?**

Pray for the Holy Spirit to help you overcome the fear, selfishness, or temptation that leads to less than Godly behavior. Pray for the transformation of your heart and mind.

DAY 3

Read Luke 7:36-50

Society would probably assume that the Pharisee is the good guy in this story. After all, he was a religious leader who invited Jesus to a meal at his home with other honored guests. In reality, the Pharisee dishonored Jesus by his failure to greet Jesus properly (read verses 44-47). When we go through the motions of being religious people, without having a change of heart that reflects humility, tolerance, love, and graciousness we start to look an awful lot like the Pharisee in this story. It is both counter-cultural

and humbling to become like the sinful woman who knew she was a sinner, who was grateful for the grace and forgiveness offered by Jesus, and who loved extravagantly in response.

- **Is your religious life real, deep, and transformational or is it just for show?**
- **Are you more like the Pharisee or the sinful woman?**

Reflect on the story from Luke. Ask God to help you discover where you fit into the story.

DAY 4

[Read Matthew 9:9-13 and Luke 23:32-43](#)

Jesus knows we have fallen far from where God originally intended us to be. He came for us anyway. In our text from Matthew, Jesus reminds us that he came for sinners. Our Lord's gracious words to the thief who was crucified next to him teach us that forgiveness is ours and that Jesus made it possible for us to regain the stature God intended for us. We are not destined to live our lives condemned to a place far below "a little lower than God."

- **Reflect on the fact that Jesus came for you and for me.**
- **What characteristics did the thief demonstrate while hanging on his cross?**
- **Do you have anything in common with the thief? Do you have anything in common with the Pharisees from today's reading from Matthew?**

Reflect on these passages and how they reflect your life and attitudes. Ask the Holy Spirit to aid you as you reflect.

DAY 5

[Read Colossians 1:15-23 and Ephesians 2:4-6](#)

Do you ever have one of those days when you feel like you are not making any progress on your faith journey? Have you ever thought, I am a hopeless hypocrite and I will never, ever reach a place where I am "just a little lower than God." We all have those kinds of days. Our struggles to stand strong in our faith through trial and temptation are very real. Today's readings offer us good news! Paul's words in Colossians remind us that Christ reconciles us to God - we do not have to find our way alone. Our society admires and rewards those who overcome great odds and great adversity. Unfortunately, we sometimes assume that we are solo-heroic individuals who must triumph over evil and temptation on our own - that assumption is wrong.

- **Where do you turn first when you realize that you have acted in a way that is not good, Godly, and Christ-like? Do you pray, ask forgiveness, and recognize that sanctification is a life-long process?**
- **What trial or temptation do you face today? Have you asked a faithful Christian friend or your pastors for prayer, advice or encouragement?**

Jesus provides a path of reconciliation between God and us. We don't have to find our way alone. Re-read the Colossians passage and pray for the strength and resilience to turn first to Christ when your faith journey takes a backwards step.

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