

FEBRUARY 3, 2019
FOURTH SUNDAY
AFTER EPIPHANY



The good news of Jesus breaks down barriers.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

These passages are related to the Lectionary texts for this Sunday.

Sunday	Luke 4:21-30	The prophet Jesus is rejected
Monday	Jeremiah 1:4-10	The Lord chooses the boy Jeremiah
Tuesday	1 Corinthians 13:1-13	The gift of love
Wednesday	2 Chronicles 34:1-7	The reign of Josiah
Thursday	Acts 10:44-48	Gentiles receive the Holy Spirit
Friday	John 1:43-51	Jesus calls Philip and Nathanael
Saturday	Psalms 71:1-6	A prayer for God's protection
Sunday	Luke 5:1-11	Jesus calls the first disciples

SCRIPTURE VERSE FOR THIS WEEK

[The people of Nazareth] got up, drove [Jesus] out of the town, and led him to the brow of the hill on which their town was built, so that they might hurl him off the cliff. But he passed through the midst of them and went on his way. **Luke 4:29-30 (NRSV)**

PRAYERS AND BLESSING

A Prayer for the Week:

Compassionate God, your mercy brings in the foreigner and the enemy into your reign of love. Help us to be your loving messengers today. In Jesus' name, amen.

Mealtime Prayer:

Lord God, give us hearts that are grateful for your kindness that feeds us and strengthens us each day. Help us to be your loving servants. Amen.

A Blessing to Give:

May the Lord God of righteousness be your refuge and strength, your rock and your fortress. (Psalm 71:2-3)



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HYMN OF THE WEEK

*Goodness Is Stronger
Than Evil*



CARING CONVERSATIONS

Discuss in your home, small group, or use for personal reflections:

- Describe or think about what it means to be a friend.
- If you were asked to choose a team, how would you decide who is on your side?
- People often join together by finding a common enemy. In Luke 4:21-30 Jesus alienates himself from his own townspeople by telling how God supported the enemies of Israel. How is Jesus' message of God's support for those rejected by others good news for you?

DEVOTIONS

Read: Luke 4:21-30.

Jesus preaches in the synagogue in his hometown of Nazareth (4:14-21). The people are thrilled and praise Jesus until he points out how God cared for a foreign widow when there were plenty of widows who needed help in Israel and how God healed Naaman, the commander of an enemy army. The townspeople did not like the way Jesus showed how God cared for the enemy of the people of Israel. Historically, religion has often been used to support one's own people, supporting nationalism over true faith. Jesus experienced this, too. How do you see that happening in our world today? God's love leads us to a humility that "bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things" (1 Corinthians 13:7). How can God's love lead you to break down barriers between you and people you might consider your "enemy" because they disagree with you or are different than you?

Pray: **Dear Merciful God, thank you for loving us beyond anything we deserve. Guide us to love others, especially those we see as different from us. Help us to love as we have been loved through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

SERVICE

Children and youth can easily be seen as the "church of the future" or future leaders in society. In Jeremiah 1:4-10 and Psalm 71:5-6 God trains and equips children to be faithful followers now, not later, and, in Jeremiah's case, a prophetic leader. Identify how you can support and mentor children and youth in the faith community and larger society.

RITUALS AND TRADITIONS

God's love breaks down all barriers and all loyalties that separate one from another. Even our faith commitments mean nothing without love. It is a tradition for some people to keep a love journal. Pictures, sketches, and notes are captured in the journal as they see or experience images or acts of love in their daily life. Consider creating your own love journal and begin a daily ritual this week of prayerfully reciting 1 Corinthians 13:1-13, the great love hymn of the New Testament.



In addition to *Taking Faith Home*, celebrate milestones in your daily life as an effective faith formation tool. Go to: www.milestonesministry.org