

# 2017 Summer Personal Worship Series



Nine short personal devotions follow and are intended as weekly worship experiences for all of our Faith family members to enjoy wherever they are this summer. We invite you to pray the prayers, reflect on the reflections and sing along with the hymn (the links take you to YouTube). In this way our Faith family can continue to gather and stay in touch while we take a break from our regular Sunday services during July and August.

*Blessings, the Faith Worship Team*

## BACKGROUND:

Luke, the author of the third Gospel and the book of Acts, was a scientist and historian, and in the gospel of Luke he tells us the story of Jesus Christ exactly as it happened. Jesus emerges primarily as a teacher of ethical wisdom, someone who is very much interested in instilling the virtues of compassion and forgiveness among his followers.

A study of the book of Luke is the foundation for our summer worship series at Faith. Each week we will read a scripture from Luke and reflect on it through the lens using some or all of these four questions:

1. What did Jesus say about himself?
2. What did Jesus teach about the nature of reality?
3. What did Jesus tell his listeners to do?
4. How did Jesus model what he taught in the way He lived his life?

We encourage you to keep a journal and note your thoughts and discoveries as you go.

*This worship series has been based on the Lifeguide Bible studies "Luke 1-9" and "Luke 9-24" published by InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove, Illinois. ©2001 by Ada Lum.*

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## 1) JULY 2: HOPE FOR ALL PEOPLE

### OPENING PRAYER:

Source of Life and Love, you call us to gather in groups small and large. You promise to be in the midst of us, wherever and whenever we come together. We praise you with song and movement, offering joy and thanksgiving. May all we do and are, glorify you and reveal your love. And may our love be genuine and transforming. In Christ's holy name, we pray. Amen

*(Written by Laura Turnbull, Penticton U.C., Penticton, BC.  
Gathering, Pentecost 1, 2015. Used with permission)*

### SCRIPTURE: Luke 3:21 to Luke 4:13 (*The Message Bible*)

#### “Tested by the devil”

<sup>1-2</sup> Now Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, left the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wild. For forty wilderness days and nights he was tested by the Devil. He ate nothing during those days, and when the time was up he was hungry.

<sup>3</sup> The Devil, playing on his hunger, gave the first test: “Since you’re God’s Son, command this stone to turn into a loaf of bread.”

<sup>4</sup> Jesus answered by quoting Deuteronomy: “It takes more than bread to really live.”

<sup>5-7</sup> For the second test he led him up and spread out all the kingdoms of the earth on display at once. Then the Devil said, “They’re yours in all their splendor to serve your pleasure. I’m in charge of them all and can turn them over to whomever I wish. Worship me and they’re yours, the whole works.”

<sup>8</sup> Jesus refused, again backing his refusal with Deuteronomy: “Worship the Lord your God and only the Lord your God. Serve him with absolute single-heartedness.”

<sup>9-11</sup> For the third test the Devil took him to Jerusalem and put him on top of the Temple. He said, “If you are God’s Son, jump. It’s written, isn’t it, that ‘he has placed you in the care of angels to protect you; they will catch you; you won’t so much as stub your toe on a stone?’”

<sup>12</sup> “Yes,” said Jesus, “and it’s also written, ‘Don’t you dare tempt the Lord your God.’”

<sup>13</sup> That completed the testing. The Devil retreated temporarily, lying in wait for another opportunity.

**REFLECTION:**

According to Encyclopedia.com, the word “temptation” in the Bible refers to a situation in which one experiences a challenge to choose between fidelity and infidelity to one’s obligations toward God. In the scripture reading above, consider the answers to the following questions:

1. What do Jesus’s actions and answers say about himself?
2. What does this story teach us about the nature of reality?
3. What would Jesus tell us to do in the same situation?
4. How did Jesus model what he taught in the way He lived his life?

**HYMN: “I want Jesus to walk with me” sung by Eric Bibb**

[[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WvCCRr\\_Kyx0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WvCCRr_Kyx0)]

**CLOSING PRAYER:**

Go forth encouraged; be an encourager.

Know you are loved and be a lover.

Be aware of spirit in you and go forth

Spirited in all you are and do and say.

Godspeed!

*(Written by David Lander, while at Castleton-Grafton P.C., Grafton ON.  
Gathering, Pentecost 1, 2015. Used with permission)*

## 2) JULY 9: MANY KINDS OF FAITH

### OPENING PRAYER:

We have heard something, O God, something that makes us curious, inspires us, even excites us. Away from the centers of power, in our less noticed neighbourhoods, you are brining something world-changing into being.

We come with our curiosity, our inspiration, our excitement; we come with our gifts, our wisdom, our hunger to experience your power and your life and to be changed.

Amen.

*(Written by Robin Wardlaw, Glen Rhodes U.C., Toronto ON.  
Gathering, Pentecost 1, 2015. Used with permission)*

### SCRIPTURE: Luke 7: 18–35 (*The Message Bible*)

<sup>18-19</sup> John's disciples reported back to him the news of all these events taking place. He sent two of them to the Master to ask the question, "Are you the One we've been expecting, or are we still waiting?"

<sup>20</sup> The men showed up before Jesus and said, "John the Baptizer sent us to ask you, 'Are you the One we've been expecting, or are we still waiting?'"

<sup>21-23</sup> In the next two or three hours Jesus healed many from diseases, distress, and evil spirits. To many of the blind he gave the gift of sight. Then he gave his answer: "Go back and tell John what you have just seen and heard:

The blind see,  
The lame walk,  
Lepers are cleansed,  
The deaf hear,  
The dead are raised,  
The wretched of the earth  
have God's salvation hospitality extended to them.

"Is this what you were expecting? Then count yourselves fortunate!"

<sup>24-27</sup> After John's messengers left to make their report, Jesus said more about John to the crowd of people. "What did you expect when you went out to see him in the wild? A weekend camper? Hardly. What then? A sheik in silk pyjamas? Not in the wilderness, not by a long shot. What then? A messenger from God? That's right, a messenger! Probably the greatest messenger you'll ever hear. He is the messenger Malachi announced when he wrote,

I'm sending my messenger on ahead  
To make the road smooth for you.

2<sup>8-30</sup> “Let me lay it out for you as plainly as I can: No one in history surpasses John the Baptizer, but in the kingdom he prepared you for, the lowliest person is ahead of him. The ordinary and disreputable people who heard John, by being baptized by him into the kingdom, are the clearest evidence; the Pharisees and religious officials would have nothing to do with such a baptism, wouldn’t think of giving up their place in line to their inferiors.

31-35 “How can I account for the people of this generation? They’re like spoiled children complaining to their parents, ‘We wanted to skip rope and you were always too tired; we wanted to talk but you were always too busy.’ John the Baptizer came fasting and you called him crazy. The Son of Man came feasting and you called him a lush. Opinion polls don’t count for much, do they? The proof of the pudding is in the eating.”

### **REFLECTION:**

Sometimes we struggle over the exclusive claims of the Christian faith. Is Jesus the only way to God? Living in a pluralistic society has conditioned us to resist such a narrow view. But we observe how differently people approach Jesus and how personally he treats each. Gradually we see a distinction: there is indeed only one way to God—through Jesus Christ, but there are many ways to Jesus Christ.

1. What do Jesus’s actions and answers say about himself?
2. What does this story teach us about the nature of reality?
3. What would Jesus tell us to do in the same situation?
4. How did Jesus model what he taught in the way He lived his life?

### **HYMN: “In Christ Alone” – from Passion 2013**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wNRFumI2ch0>

### **CLOSING PRAYER:**

And now may we leave this time and place together: grateful, hopeful, anticipating the great thing that God would do in our lives and in the life of the world. May we leave this time and place together: eager, excited and grateful for the opportunities given to us to share God’s love in all the places life calls us to be. Amen.

*(Written by Bob Root, Peterborough ON.  
Gathering, Pentecost 1, 2015. Used with permission)*

### 3) JULY 16: HEARING GOD, FIRST STEP OF FAITH

#### OPENING PRAYER:

God of the morning, God of the dawning of creation,  
Help us to know that we are creatures of your making;  
Sisters and brothers of the waters and trees and grasses and rocks;  
Brothers and sisters of the birds and fish and animals.  
We are made in your image, we are love,  
We are precious in your sight.  
Help us to choose what you choose,  
So that our very living is an act of worship.  
May it be so.

*(Written by Beatrix Schirner, Ponoka U.C., Ponoka, AB.  
Gathering, Pentecost 1, 2015. Used with permission)*

#### SCRIPTURE: Luke 8: 4–18 (*The Message Bible*)

<sup>4-8</sup> As they went from town to town, a lot of people joined in and traveled along. He addressed them, using this story: “A farmer went out to sow his seed. Some of it fell on the road; it was tramped down and the birds ate it. Other seed fell in the gravel; it sprouted, but withered because it didn’t have good roots. Other seed fell in the weeds; the weeds grew with it and strangled it. Other seed fell in rich earth and produced a bumper crop.

“Are you listening to this? Really listening?”

<sup>9</sup> His disciples asked, “Why did you tell this story?”

<sup>10</sup> He said, “You’ve been given insight into God’s kingdom—you know how it works. There are others who need stories. But even with stories some of them aren’t going to get it:

Their eyes are open but don’t see a thing,

Their ears are open but don’t hear a thing.

<sup>11-12</sup> “This story is about some of those people. The seed is the Word of God. The seeds on the road are those who hear the Word, but no sooner do they hear it than the Devil snatches it from them so they won’t believe and be saved.

<sup>13</sup> “The seeds in the gravel are those who hear with enthusiasm, but the enthusiasm doesn’t go very deep. It’s only another fad, and the moment there’s trouble it’s gone.

<sup>14</sup> “And the seed that fell in the weeds—well, these are the ones who hear, but then the seed is crowded out and nothing comes of it as they go about their lives worrying about tomorrow,

making money, and having fun.

<sup>15</sup> “But the seed in the good earth—these are the good-hearts who seize the Word and hold on no matter what, sticking with it until there’s a harvest.

<sup>16-18</sup> “No one lights a lamp and then covers it with a washtub or shoves it under the bed. No, you set it up on a lamp stand so those who enter the room can see their way. We’re not keeping secrets; we’re telling them. We’re not hiding things; we’re bringing everything out into the open. So be careful that you don’t become misers of what you hear. Generosity begets generosity. Stinginess impoverishes.”

### **REFLECTION:**

In contrast to the first three soils, Jesus says little about the fourth soil. He simply says it was good. But you don’t need to be an expert gardener to know what makes plants grow to maturity – soil full of nutrients, plenty of water and lots of sunlight. Jesus is exhorting each of us to examine our own heart and take the appropriate action to become good soil.

Think about the following questions as they relate to this parable:

1. What do Jesus’s actions and answers say about himself?
2. What does this story teach us about the nature of reality?
3. What would Jesus tell us to do in the same situation?
4. How did Jesus model what he taught in the way He lived his life?

### **HYMN: “Let your little light shine” sung by Ana Hernandez**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4DvyNGZLvB8>

Recorded at the Wild Goose Festival, Hot Springs NC, 2015.

Song based on arrangement by Pamela Warrick-Smith

### **CLOSING PRAYER:**

For the sowing to be effective, the seeds must be scattered broadly and in quantity. Go into your world, sowing the love of God by scattering your love unconditionally far and wide among all your neighbours.

*(Written by George Allan, Chatham ON.  
Gathering, Pentecost 1, 2017. Used with permission)*

#### 4) JULY 23: DISCIPLE TRAINING, STRETCHED IN FAITH

##### OPENING PRAYER:

O Divine Love,

This week's gospel brings a question of identity – who are we and whose are we?

Who do people say we are – baby boomers, Gen-Xers, has-beens, Jesus freaks, Christians?

Who is this one we follow on the path to finding you at the centre of our life?

Who are we, God? Whom do we follow?

How does it all shape what we value and the choices we make?

Bless us with the courage this morning as we listen for your challenge and invitation.

Amen

*(Written by Jaunita Austin, Sicamous U.C., Sicamous BC.  
Gathering, Pentecost 1, 2017. Used with permission)*

##### SCRIPTURE: Luke 9: 18–27 (*The Message Bible*)

<sup>18</sup> One time when Jesus was off praying by himself, his disciples nearby, he asked them, “What are the crowds saying about me, about who I am?”

<sup>19</sup> They said, “John the Baptizer. Others say Elijah. Still others say that one of the prophets from long ago has come back.”

<sup>20-21</sup> He then asked, “And you—what are you saying about me? Who am I?”

Peter answered, “The Messiah of God.” Jesus then warned them to keep it quiet. They were to tell no one what Peter had said.

<sup>22</sup> He went on, “It is necessary that the Son of Man proceed to an ordeal of suffering, be tried and found guilty by the religious leaders, high priests, and religion scholars, be killed, and on the third day be raised up alive.”

<sup>23-27</sup> Then he told them what they could expect for themselves: “Anyone who intends to come with me has to let me lead. You're not in the driver's seat—I am. Don't run from suffering; embrace it. Follow me and I'll show you how. Self-help is no help at all. Self-sacrifice is the way, my way, to finding yourself, your true self. What good would it do to get everything you want and lose you, the real you? If any of you is embarrassed with me and the way I'm leading you, know that the Son of Man will be far more embarrassed with you when he arrives in all his splendor in company with the Father and the holy angels. This isn't, you realize, pie in the sky by and by. Some who have taken their stand right here are going to see it happen, see with their own eyes the kingdom of God.”



## REFLECTION:

“It has been my experience that superior people are attracted only by challenge.” (Ambassador Mac White in *The Ugly American*).

The Gospel of Luke tells us little about the backgrounds of Jesus’ diplomatic corps of the 12 disciples, but tells us much about how he trained them and what he expected of them.

*(Read all of chapter 9 if you have time).*

Perhaps the most important verse in this passage is verse 20, when Jesus asks:

“And you—what are you saying about me? Who am I?”

It’s a question that leaves us quite defenseless. It is an important question, a vital question, a question that deserves to be answered squarely and honestly.

As you think about the scripture and your answer to Jesus’ question, consider these questions also:

1. What do Jesus’s actions and answers say about himself?
2. How did Jesus model what he taught in the way He lived his life?

## HYMN: “I have decided to follow Jesus” by Rachel Scott

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gKJ5exVTe1g>

## CLOSING PRAYER:

Enter into the world again, confident in the one who fed the multitudes and who walked on the water even in the storm. Spread his word, “It is I. Do not be afraid,” to all you encounter in your daily living. Love your neighbor as you love yourself.

*(Written by George Allan, Sprucedale Providence P.C., Chatham-Kent ON.  
Gathering, Pentecost 1, 2015. Used with permission)*

## 5) JULY 30: DEFINING NEIGHBOURS

### OPENING PRAYER:

Who are we, God?

Whom do we follow?

How does it all shape what we value and the choices we make?

Bless us with courage this morning as we listen for your challenge and invitation.

Amen

*(Written by Juanita Austin, Sicamous U.C., Sicamous BC.  
Gathering, Pentecost 1, 2017. Used with permission)*

### SCRIPTURE: Luke 10: 25–37 (*The Message Bible*)

#### **Defining “Neighbour”**

<sup>25</sup> Just then a religion scholar stood up with a question to test Jesus. “Teacher, what do I need to do to get eternal life?”

<sup>26</sup> He answered, “What’s written in God’s Law? How do you interpret it?”

<sup>27</sup> He said, “That you love the Lord your God with all your passion and prayer and muscle and intelligence—and that you love your neighbour as well as you do yourself.”

<sup>28</sup> “Good answer!” said Jesus. “Do it and you’ll live.”

<sup>29</sup> Looking for a loophole, he asked, “And just how would you define ‘neighbour’?”

<sup>30-32</sup> Jesus answered by telling a story. “There was once a man traveling from Jerusalem to Jericho. On the way, he was attacked by robbers. They took his clothes, beat him up, and went off leaving him half-dead. Luckily, a priest was on his way down the same road, but when he saw him he angled across to the other side. Then a Levite religious man showed up; he also avoided the injured man.

<sup>33-35</sup> “A Samaritan traveling the road came on him. When he saw the man’s condition, his heart went out to him. He gave him first aid, disinfecting and bandaging his wounds. Then he lifted him onto his donkey, led him to an inn and made him comfortable. In the morning he took out two silver coins and gave them to the innkeeper, saying, ‘Take good care of him. If it costs any more, put it on my bill—I’ll pay you on my way back.’

<sup>36</sup> “What do you think? Which of the three became a neighbour to the man attacked by robbers?”

<sup>37</sup> “The one who treated him kindly,” the religion scholar responded.

Jesus said, “Go and do the same.”

## REFLECTION:

Luke's story is powerful, for it speaks of the power of love that transcends all creeds and cultures and "creates" a neighbour out of a complete stranger. The parable is personal, for it describes with profound simplicity the birth of a human relationship that has a personal, physical touch, transcending social and cultural taboos, as one person binds the wounds of another. The parable is a pastoral, for it is filled with the mystery of care and concern that is at the heart of what is best in human beings. The story is primarily practical, for it urges us to cross all barriers of culture and community and to go and do likewise! Compassion is not a spectator sport.

*(Salt + Light Media: <http://saltandlighttv.org/blogfeed/getpost.php?id=14604>)*

Think about the following questions as they relate to this parable:

1. What do Jesus's actions and answers say about himself?
2. What does this story teach us about the nature of reality?
3. What would Jesus tell us to do in the same situation?
4. How did Jesus model what he taught in the way He lived his life?

## HYMNS: "Give me your eyes" – written and sung by Brandon Heath

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P5AkNqLuVgY>

## BLESSING:

Go, beloved of God.

You are blessed to be a blessing to one another and the world.

Go, well-made and made-well children of God, beat your drum.

Sing your song.

*(Written By Linda Yates, Lower and Middle Musquodoboit Pastoral Charges, NS.  
Gathering, Pentecost 1, 2017. Used with permission)*

## 6) AUGUST 6: DON'T WORRY ... BE HAPPY

### OPENING PRAYER:

God, mysterious and encouraging, you always accept us, in our messy chaotic lives.  
Your acceptance of us leads to peace, and from that peace comes a willingness to reconcile.  
Jesus said, "Come to me all you that are weary... and I will give you rest."

He brought peace that broke down the dividing walls  
so that reconciliation with God can happen.

We are grateful for what Jesus has done; God is our strength as we come together  
to build a loving community of faith.

Amen

*(Written By Cheryl McLeod, Admaston P.C., Renfrew ON.  
Gathering, Pentecost 1, 2017. Used with permission)*

### SCRIPTURE: Luke 12: 22–34 (*The Message Bible*)

<sup>22-24</sup> He continued this subject with his disciples. "Don't fuss about what's on the table at mealtimes or if the clothes in your closet are in fashion. There is far more to your inner life than the food you put in your stomach, more to your outer appearance than the clothes you hang on your body. Look at the ravens, free and unfettered, not tied down to a job description, carefree in the care of God. And you count far more.

<sup>25-28</sup> "Has anyone by fussing before the mirror ever gotten taller by so much as an inch? If fussing can't even do that, why fuss at all? Walk into the fields and look at the wildflowers. They don't fuss with their appearance—but have you ever seen color and design quite like it? The ten best-dressed men and women in the country look shabby alongside them. If God gives such attention to the wildflowers, most of them never even seen, don't you think he'll attend to you, take pride in you, do his best for you?

<sup>29-32</sup> "What I'm trying to do here is get you to relax, not be so preoccupied with getting so you can respond to God's giving. People who don't know God and the way he works fuss over these things, but you know both God and how he works. Steep yourself in God-reality, God-initiative, God-provisions. You'll find all your everyday human concerns will be met. Don't be afraid of missing out. You're my dearest friends! The Father wants to give you the very kingdom itself.

<sup>33-34</sup> "Be generous. Give to the poor. Get yourselves a bank that can't go bankrupt, a bank in heaven far from bank robbers, safe from embezzlers, a bank you can bank on. It's obvious, isn't it? The place where your treasure is, is the place you will most want to be, and end up being.

## **REFLECTION: Don't worry ... be happy**

Jesus is talking about our basic approach to life. Are we anxious and lacking trust in God, constantly trying to gain control of things that often are beyond our control? Or do we trust God to provide and concentrate on honouring relationships by pursuing righteousness and serving others with our resources? Two things tell us the answers to these questions: our heart and our pocketbook. Our heart can tell us if we are anxious, and our pocketbook can tell us if we are generous. Both tell us if we are trusting God.

Think about the following questions as they relate to this scripture:

1. What does this story teach us about the nature of reality?
2. How did Jesus model what he taught in the way He lived his life?

## **HYMN: "Just a closer walk with thee" sung by Lynda Randle**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6cjTAKEMNmA>

## **CLOSING PRAYER:**

Knowing that we are healed,  
Taking this message into the world,  
Proclaiming life for all of creation,  
Let us go forth and be a blessing!  
Amen

*(Written by Kate Crawford, First St. Andrew's U.C., London ON.  
Gathering, Pentecost 1, 2016. Used with permission)*

## 7) AUGUST 13: FORGIVENESS

### OPENING PRAYER:

Loving God, we come into your presence today to hear your word, feel your presence, and ready ourselves to be your servants in the world. Some of us come need to forgive another; others come needing to be forgiven. We all come knowing that you alone can infuse us with the peace and grace to both give and receive forgiveness because you have first forgiven us. Be with us now in our worship. Amen

*(Written by Catherine Tovel, Kilworth U.C., Komoka ON.  
Gathering, Pentecost 1, 2016. Used with permission)*

### SCRIPTURE: Luke 15: 11–32 (*The Message Bible*)

#### **The Story of the Lost Son**

<sup>11-12</sup> Then he said, “There was once a man who had two sons. The younger said to his father, ‘Father, I want right now what’s coming to me.’

<sup>12-16</sup> “So the father divided the property between them. It wasn’t long before the younger son packed his bags and left for a distant country. There, undisciplined and dissipated, he wasted everything he had. After he had gone through all his money, there was a bad famine all through that country and he began to hurt. He signed on with a citizen there who assigned him to his fields to slop the pigs. He was so hungry he would have eaten the corncobs in the pig slop, but no one would give him any.

<sup>17-20</sup> “That brought him to his senses. He said, ‘All those farmhands working for my father sit down to three meals a day, and here I am starving to death. I’m going back to my father. I’ll say to him, Father, I’ve sinned against God, I’ve sinned before you; I don’t deserve to be called your son. Take me on as a hired hand.’ He got right up and went home to his father.

<sup>20-21</sup> “When he was still a long way off, his father saw him. His heart pounding, he ran out, embraced him, and kissed him. The son started his speech: ‘Father, I’ve sinned against God, I’ve sinned before you; I don’t deserve to be called your son ever again.’

<sup>22-24</sup> “But the father wasn’t listening. He was calling to the servants, ‘Quick. Bring a clean set of clothes and dress him. Put the family ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Then get a grain-fed heifer and roast it. We’re going to feast! We’re going to have a wonderful time! My son is here—given up for dead and now alive! Given up for lost and now found!’ And they began to have a wonderful time.

<sup>25-27</sup> “All this time his older son was out in the field. When the day’s work was done he came in. As he approached the house, he heard the music and dancing. Calling over one of the houseboys, he asked what was going on. He told him, ‘Your brother came home. Your father has ordered a feast—barbecued beef!—because he has him home safe and sound.’

<sup>28-30</sup> “The older brother stalked off in an angry sulk and refused to join in. His father came out and tried to talk to him, but he wouldn’t listen. The son said, ‘Look how many years I’ve stayed here serving you, never giving you one moment of grief, but have you ever thrown a party for me and my friends? Then this son of yours who has thrown away your money on whores shows up and you go all out with a feast!’

<sup>31-32</sup> “His father said, ‘Son, you don’t understand. You’re with me all the time, and everything that is mine is yours—but this is a wonderful time, and we had to celebrate. This brother of yours was dead, and he’s alive! He was lost, and he’s found!’”

### **REFLECTION: Forgiveness**

The parable of the prodigal son is surely one of the most beautiful stories ever written. It has been celebrated on stage, in art and music, and most significantly, it has been relived in countless lives and families. Luke has so exquisitely rendered the feelings of the father and his sons that we are immediately drawn into the drama of this very human situation.

Biblical scholars agree that the father in the story represents the God who never gives up on us, and always forgives us no matter what we do. The wayward son represents the lost who make mistakes and bad choices, hurting themselves and the people who love them. And the elder son represents the self-righteous, those who feel they have done nothing wrong – except perhaps failing to forgive! The love of the father demonstrates God’s love for each of us and his personal attentiveness towards all humanity. That is the example that Jesus was teaching then and is teaching now.

Think about the following questions as they relate to this parable:

1. What do Jesus’s actions and answers say about himself?
2. What does this story teach us about the nature of reality?
3. What would Jesus tell us to do in the same situation?
4. How did Jesus model what he taught in the way He lived his life?

### **HYMN: “Forgiveness” written and sung by Matthew West**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KOVknKj6EzA>

### **CLOSING PRAYER:**

Love rules ... in you, and chances to care for others are endless.

Love rules ... in your neighbor, and opportunities for community are endless.

Love rules ... everything, and a different world is possible.

*(Written by Robin Wardlaw, Glen Rhodes U.C., Toronto ON.  
Gathering, Pentecost 1, 2016. Used with permission)*

## 8) AUGUST 20 – HANGING IN THERE

### OPENING PRAYER

“Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens,  
and I will give you rest.

Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me ...

For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”

We hear your call and your promise, O Christ.

Help us to release that which is a burden and  
take up the good news that is light and peace.

Amen

*(Written by Robin Wardlaw, Glen Rhodes U.C., Toronto ON.  
Gathering, Pentecost 1, 2017. Used with permission)*

### SCRIPTURE: Luke 17: 5–19 (*The Message Bible*)

#### **A Kernel of Faith**

<sup>5</sup>The apostles came up and said to the Master, “Give us more faith.”

<sup>6</sup>But the Master said, “You don’t need more faith. There is no ‘more’ or ‘less’ in faith. If you have a bare kernel of faith, say the size of a poppy seed, you could say to this sycamore tree, ‘Go jump in the lake,’ and it would do it.

<sup>7-10</sup>“Suppose one of you has a servant who comes in from plowing the field or tending the sheep. Would you take his coat, set the table, and say, ‘Sit down and eat’? Wouldn’t you be more likely to say, ‘Prepare dinner; change your clothes and wait table for me until I’ve finished my coffee; then go to the kitchen and have your supper’? Does the servant get special thanks for doing what’s expected of him? It’s the same with you. When you’ve done everything expected of you, be matter-of-fact and say, ‘The work is done. What we were told to do, we did.’”

<sup>11-13</sup>It happened that as he made his way toward Jerusalem, he crossed over the border between Samaria and Galilee. As he entered a village, ten men, all lepers, met him. They kept their distance but raised their voices, calling out, “Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!”

<sup>14-16</sup>Taking a good look at them, he said, “Go, show yourselves to the priests.”

They went, and while still on their way, became clean. One of them, when he realized that he was healed, turned around and came back, shouting his gratitude, glorifying God. He knelt at Jesus’ feet, so grateful. He couldn’t thank him enough—and he was a Samaritan.

<sup>17-19</sup>Jesus said, “Were not ten healed? Where are the nine? Can none be found to come back



and give glory to God except this outsider?” Then he said to him, “Get up. On your way. Your faith has healed and saved you.”

### **REFLECTION:**

This story serves as an invitation to believers – then and now – to recognize that what we see makes all the difference. In the face of adversity, do we see danger or opportunity? In the face of human need, do we see demand or gift? In the face of the stranger, do we see potential enemy or friend? And it goes further. When we look to God, do we see stern judge or loving parent? When we look to ourselves, do we see failure or beloved child? When we look to the future, do we see fearful uncertainty or an open horizon? There is, of course, no right answer to any of these questions. How we answer depends upon what we see. Yet how we answer dramatically shapes both our outlook and our behaviour.

Think about the following questions as they relate to this scripture:

1. What do Jesus's actions and answers say about himself?
2. What does this story teach us about the nature of reality?
3. How did Jesus model what he taught in the way He lived his life?

### **HYMN: “Find us faithful” sung by Alessandra Sorace**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EIOb8HqQc-I>

### **CLOSING PRAYER:**

The world expect us, like Martha, to do, and do we must,

But we must also, like Mary, listen and think:

Listen for the word of God and consider what God wants us to do.

Act always in love of God and neighbour.

*(Written by George Allan, Chatham ON.  
Gathering, Pentecost 1, 2016. Used with permission)*

## 9) AUGUST 27: SACRED, ETERNAL TIME

### OPENING PRAYER:

Loving God, your desire for us calls us and equips us.

Your love for us gifts us and encourages us.

Far deeper than any regret of ours is the pervasive love with which you hold us.

Anoint us in the vocation of healing and hospitality and bless us with fervor that our life's journey would stand as witness to your boundless gift in us.

In Jesus, our brother's name, we pray.

Amen

*(Written by Daryl Webber, Lowville Nelson United Ministries, Burlington ON.  
Gathering, Pentecost 1, 2017. Used with permission)*

### SCRIPTURE: Luke 22:7–20 (*The Message Bible*)

#### **The Passover Meal**

<sup>7-8</sup> The Day of Unleavened Bread came, the day the Passover lamb was butchered. Jesus sent Peter and John off, saying, "Go prepare the Passover for us so we can eat it together."

<sup>9</sup> They said, "Where do you want us to do this?"

<sup>10-12</sup> He said, "Keep your eyes open as you enter the city. A man carrying a water jug will meet you. Follow him home. Then speak with the owner of the house: The Teacher wants to know, 'Where is the guest room where I can eat the Passover meal with my disciples?' He will show you a spacious second-story room, swept and ready. Prepare the meal there."

<sup>13</sup> They left, found everything just as he told them, and prepared the Passover meal.

<sup>14-16</sup> When it was time, he sat down, all the apostles with him, and said, "You've no idea how much I have looked forward to eating this Passover meal with you before I enter my time of suffering. It's the last one I'll eat until we all eat it together in the kingdom of God."

<sup>17-18</sup> Taking the cup, he blessed it, then said, "Take this and pass it among you. As for me, I'll not drink wine again until the kingdom of God arrives."

<sup>19</sup> Taking bread, he blessed it, broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body, given for you. Eat it in my memory."

<sup>20</sup> He did the same with the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant written in my blood, blood poured out for you."

## REFLECTION:

When we participate in communion, we are reliving the original Last Supper meal. The sacred power that was present during the original event is re-created in an experience of ritual remembering that connects us not only to Jesus and the apostles, but to all those who have performed the same ritual throughout the ages. In this way past and present are integrated, providing us with a sense of continuity thus sacred, eternal time emerges.

The word communion literally means a common sharing, a partnership, a fellowship. Christian Communion is a celebration, remembrance and proclamation of Christ's life and death, sharing our memory and understanding that Christ died for us and Christ is now alive working in us. So we come to the Communion table in joy, in reverence, and in honesty. And we go from the Communion table in hope, in peace and in love.

Think about the following questions as they relate to this scripture:

1. What do Jesus's actions and answers say about himself?
2. What does this story teach us about the nature of reality?
3. How did Jesus model what he taught in the way He lived his life?

## HYMN: "One bread, one body" sung by Moon Mullen

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EYlJC26-Ch0&list=PL7CB3116EAD7464D6>

## CLOSING PRAYER:

Go now, spirit-strengthened in God's dream.

Go, spirit-comforted that you matter and have a purpose.

Go, Spirit-agitated to dare see the way it is as not the way it has to be.

Go, spirit-motivated to build a better world.

Go, spirit-companioned to be the person and the church you were meant to be.

*(Written by Castleton-Grafton P.C., Grafton ON.  
Gathering, Pentecost 1, 2016. Used with permission)*



### Faith United Milton

A mission of the United Church of Canada

WEB: [www.faithunitedmilton.org](http://www.faithunitedmilton.org)

EMAIL: [messages@faithunitedmilton.org](mailto:messages@faithunitedmilton.org)

MAILING: 420 Main Street E., Suite 454, Milton, Ontario L9T 5G3

MESSAGES: (289) 429-1151

