



Daily reflections and prayers

(Based on the Common Worship Lectionary)



Dear friends,

Firstly, Hello! And warm greetings from St Paul's Church, and from me, Luke, the vicar.

Since we cannot meet together, we are trying to keep our sense of community and love in other ways.

Here's what we are doing:

- Recorded Morning Prayer is being uploaded every day. This is a chance for us to spend 'virtual' time together and to strengthen and encourage one another. This includes a 'Thought for the Day', and some prayers, and can be accessed via the St Paul's Facebook page, or from our website stpaulschurchhook.org.uk.
- A short Communion Service is similarly being uploaded each Sunday at 9.30am. This also includes a 'Thought for the Day', and some prayers; and we invite you to prepare for this by having ready a small sip of wine or grape juice, and a small piece of bread.
- We have created a list of Church members who are particularly vulnerable, and will make sure that each one receives a phone call each week from someone in the Church. If you would prefer not to be called, please do let us know.
- We are circulating each week these Daily reflections and prayers. These will also be uploaded to our Facebook page and to our website, and sent out via the Church email system; and for those Church members who as far as I'm aware do not have access to a computer, a printed copy will be hand delivered.

Welcome to our resources for daily Bible reading and prayer. I hope you find these helpful.

For each day I have chosen two of the set readings for that day. Some will choose to read these. Others will go straight to the verse(s) for the day, the thought for the day and the prayers. Some of course will not want to use these at all, and of course that is fine. I simply encourage you to do whatever is best for you.

This isolation that we all face will not be easy. But as I reflected upon it I was reminded of these words:

"Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you." (James 4v8)

Whilst I know that James addressed these words to 'sinners', I also know that this promise is true for every one of us, no matter how great or small our sin is. So perhaps over these coming weeks of relative isolation one good that can come out of it can be that you and I draw closer to our loving God.

My prayer is that these Bible reading notes will help us to do so.

God bless you,

Luke



Monday 27 April

The selected lectionary readings for today are:

- Psalm 61
- Deuteronomy 5v1-22

Opening Prayer:

Loving God, as I read your word, speak to me I pray and lead me into your truth.
In Jesus' name. Amen.

Verse for the day:

Deuteronomy 5v6-7

⁶ "I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt,
out of the land of slavery.

⁷ "You shall have no other gods before me.

Reflection:

It's worth thinking about this first commandment. What are the things in our lives that have become other 'gods'? If you're not sure, simply ask yourself, what do I put 'before God' (verse 7)?

Maybe it's your career? Or maybe money? For some people it's material possessions, or getting a bigger house.

For some, it's things that are good, like family. But no matter how good these things are, the first commandment challenges us to actually put God first.

For some, their false god is a 'sin' or temptation they are particularly drawn to. Because a sin is a simply a desire that has become too big, too important in our lives.

So today, ask yourself. Is there a 'false god' in my life? And, if there is, make sure you kick it out and put God back on the throne of your life.

A prayer:

Loving God, forgive me for those times when I worship something other than you. Help me to put nothing and nobody before you but to worship you as the one true God. Amen.

Prayer Focus:

- Firstly, pray for your own needs and for your loved ones.
- But today, let's pray also for our Government, that God would grant them wisdom and help in these difficult days.

Daily Bible readings, reflection and prayers from St Paul's Church, Hook.



Tuesday 28 April

The selected lectionary readings for today are:

- Isaiah 44v9-29
- Deuteronomy 5v1-10

Opening Prayer:

Loving God, as I read your word, speak to me I pray and lead me into your truth.
In Jesus' name. Amen.

Verse for the day:

Deuteronomy 5v8-9

⁸ "You shall not make for yourself an image in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. ⁹ You shall not bow down to them or worship them;

Reflection:

The second commandment is about keeping things in perspective. One of the dangers of 21st century British society is that we have a tendency to value things and possessions too highly.

We may not worship animals, or the moon or the sun; but we are instead persuaded to worship things; be they cars; designer clothes, mobile phones or whatever.

The second commandment is really about keeping things in perspective. Not worshipping, idolising or over-valuing things that are made, but instead worshipping and valuing the creator.

A prayer:

Loving Father, help me to value people more than things, and you above everything. In your name I pray. Amen.

Prayer Focus:

- Firstly, pray for your own needs and for your loved ones.
- But today, let us also pray for those working in the Health Service; for doctors, nurses and all other health care professionals.
- But let's also pray for the managers, porters, cleaners and other support staff without whom the NHS could not function.

Daily Bible readings, reflection and prayers from St Paul's Church, Hook.



Wednesday 29 April

The selected lectionary readings for today are:

- Matthew 5v33-37
- Deuteronomy 5v6-11

Opening Prayer:

Loving God, as I read your word, speak to me I pray and lead me into your truth.
In Jesus' name. Amen.

Verse for the day:

Deuteronomy 5v11

You shall not misuse the name of the LORD your God, for the LORD will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name.

Reflection:

It's astonishing to me how much profanity has become accepted in our society. If I watch a comedy programme, their 'emergency-get-a-laugh- technique is to simply say the F word.

But what I find even sadder is how common it is for people to misuse the name of God. 'Oh my God', or, 'Jesus Christ.' How have these become exclamations and swear words? And yet they are accepted as the norm.

The issue here is one of respect. If we respect people we don't speak badly of them, and if we respect Almighty God, then we won't use his name as a swear word in any way.

So, let's commit ourselves today to respect God, and to respect his name.

A prayer:

Loving Father, forgive me for those times when I have misused your name. Help me to always give you the respect that you deserve as my God, my Lord and my saviour. Amen.

Prayer Focus:

- Firstly, pray for your own needs and for your loved ones.
- But today, let us also pray for teachers, many of whom are having to continue to work, and so risk contracting the virus.
- But let's also pray for our neighbours who, like us, face further isolation. May God be with them, and may they draw closer to God at this time.

Daily Bible readings, reflection and prayers from St Paul's Church, Hook.



Thursday 30 April

The selected lectionary readings for today are:

- Deuteronomy 5v12-15
- Luke 6v1-11

Opening Prayer:

Loving God, as I read your word, speak to me I pray and lead me into your truth.
In Jesus' name. Amen.

Verse for the day:

Deuteronomy 5v12

Observe the sabbath day by keeping it holy.

Reflection:

In the Old Testament the Sabbath day was a day for rest and for worship. We need both. We need a regular pattern of sabbath rest, and we actually need to worship God. It is written into our DNA and, as the famous Church sign says, 'Seven days without prayer makes one weak!'

But, of course, Jesus taught us the real meaning of Sabbath. It's not a legalistic restriction; rather it is a blessing from God designed to give us the rest and spiritual refreshment that we need. Sadly, however, our Sundays are becoming more and more busy, and people find reasons and excuses to not come to Church, and to not honour God.

But worship is in fact a means of recharging your spiritual batteries. It's like watering the house-plant of our spiritual soul. Gradually, if you fail to water a house plant it slowly withers and dies; and the same is true of our spiritual life.

So, commit yourself today to making weekly worship at Church a personal priority. Re-charge those batteries. Water that house-plant, and you will find refreshment for your soul.

A prayer:

Loving Father, thank you for blessing us with a weekly day of rest and spiritual refreshment. Help me to make worshipping you more of a priority in my life. Amen.

Prayer Focus:

- Firstly, pray for your own needs and for your loved ones.
- But today, let us pray for all of those working in the health service, in whatever capacity. Thank God for all that they do and pray that God would keep them safe.
- Pray also for our Government as they make decisions that affect us all. May God give them wisdom, and may they make decisions for the good of all.

Daily Bible readings, reflection and prayers from St Paul's Church, Hook.



Friday 1 May

The selected lectionary readings for today are:

- Deuteronomy 5v16
- Matthew 12v46-50

Opening Prayer:

Loving God, as I read your word, speak to me I pray and lead me into your truth.
In Jesus' name. Amen.

Verse for the day:
Deuteronomy 5v16
Honour your father and mother.

Reflection:

One of the mantras of our age is 'family is the most important', and that's great. Family really are important and we should be there for our family as much as it is possible for us to do so.

Of course, sadly, some families are places of abuse and cruelty; in such cases we are, of course, right to walk away.

But mostly, families are a blessing that we should celebrate and enjoy.

Which brings us to the fourth commandment, to 'honour your father and mother.' What does it mean in practice? I think it means visiting them (or, during lockdown, calling them). It means treating them with respect. I also means that we should forgive them for their shortcomings. No parents are perfect; I certainly haven't been. It means that whatever we do or say, we should honour them.

But there is also a lesson here, from our Gospel reading, about the family we have in the Church. May we love, care for and honour them also.

A prayer:

Loving Father, thank you for my parents and for all the love and good that they gave for me. Help me to be the best parent that I can possibly be. Amen.

Prayer Focus:

- Firstly, pray for your own needs and for your loved ones.
- But today, let us also pray for those who are mourning loved ones today, for whatever reason. May God comfort them in their loss.
- Pray also for families who are struggling with kids who want to get out but can't, and who are having to undertake home schooling. May God help parents and children alike.