

# Daily Readings

Please note: The book of James is a book I like to read at least once a year. During the next few weeks the study guide will follow the book of James. This book is often misunderstood as emphasizing works over faith. Martin Luther in the 16th century referred to James as the “epistle of straw.” Luther believed that the focus of “salvation by faith” is lost in James as he teaches his reader about the importance of works as a person of faith in Christ.

James’ message is for the person who has lost touch with the high call of Christ in their behavior. It is far more than an “epistle of straw”. As the apostle Paul says, **“By your fruit you shall be known.”** Likewise, James knows that our life with Christ begins in faith, and then leads to a new way to live. The Study Guide readings allow you to dig deeper.

**Monday, June 28 – Read James 3: 1-12.** As James continues in his teaching, he reminds us that those who lead and teach are called to a higher standard of behavior. Further, he focuses on the use of our language. Using the tongue as a metaphor for our language, James reminds us that the tongue can be destructive in our Christian relationships. He states clearly that blessing and cursing can not come from the same mouth. Pay attention to the way you use your language today. Are you blessing others or cursing them? How easily does your conversation turn to gossip? Start with your family and move outward to intentionally bless someone today.

**Tuesday, June 29 – Read James 3: 13-18.** James offers a formula for discerning true wisdom. He refers to bitter envy and selfish ambition as that which has an earthly origin. On the other hand, wisdom from above is **“pure, peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits.”** Start your day by finding a place to create peace where there is discord. End your day by giving thanks for the wisdom and fruits that come from above.

**Wednesday, June 30 – Read James 4: 1-10.** In this part of James’ letter he speaks harshly to the reader. His language is judgmental and difficult to read. Yet, James intent is not to invite the reader into a state of guilt. James wants us to understand the joy and exaltation that comes in drawing close to God. Conflict comes through our distance from God. Begin your day drawing close to God through prayer and meditation. Listen quietly to God’s urging. Allow God to use you in someone’s life today.

**Thursday, July 1 – Read James 4: 11-12.** In this short verse James reinforces an earlier warning concerning our language. Here, he strongly admonishes **“speaking evil of another.”** Measure yourself today. For every negative word to speak about someone, speak at least five positive words about someone else.

**Friday, July 2 – Read James 4:13-17.** Life is short. James encourages the reader to live each day for the Lord. This passage does not condemn planning for the future. Instead, it condemns planning for the future without including God. Before you begin your day, look at your calendar. Have you included Christ in your planning for the next three months?



## STUDY GUIDE & DAILY READINGS

Sunday, June 27, 2010

### Joseph: From Prison to Palace *Redemption (Week 3 of 3)*

No matter how difficult life may seem, God has created us for a purpose. Our hope in this sermon series is to encourage parents to discuss the Joseph story with kids and family as they experience the same story at VBS. In addition, all of us can learn from the Joseph story the great promise of God’s promise to use even the most difficult and challenging times in our lives for good.

#### **Genesis 50:13-20 — The Word from the Bible** *(Today’s New International Version)*

**They carried him to the land of Canaan and buried him in the cave in the field of Machpelah, near Mamre, which Abraham had bought along with the field as a burial place from Ephron the Hittite. After burying his father, Joseph returned to Egypt, together with his brothers and all the others who had gone with him to bury his father.**

**When Joseph’s brothers saw that their father was dead, they said, “What if Joseph holds a grudge against us and pays us back for all the wrongs we did to him?” So they sent word to Joseph, saying, “Your father left these instructions before he died: ‘This is what you are to say to Joseph: I ask you to forgive your brothers the sins and the wrongs they committed in treating you so badly.’ Now please forgive the sins of the servants of the God of your father.” When their message came to him, Joseph wept.**

**His brothers then came and threw themselves down before him. “We are your slaves,” they said.**

**But Joseph said to them, “Don’t be afraid. Am I in the place of God? You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives.”**

#### **Joseph**

The story of Joseph was as well known as the great stories of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, the Exodus, Joshua, the Judges and Kingdoms of David and Solomon. These were the stories of the Hebrew’s faith history. This history continues through us as we experience God’s goodness, care and providence over God’s people. We continue this week by watching the now powerful and influential Joseph use his power to help others. The reach of his compassion moves beyond Egypt back to his home land as he offers aid to the tribes of his fathers and brothers. As the book of Genesis closes, Joseph returns to his homeland to bury his father with his brothers. With Jacob gone, his brothers believe that Joseph will take revenge on them for selling him into slavery. Instead, they hear the words of forgiveness and redemption, **“Don’t be afraid. Am I in the place of God? You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives.”**

### **Genesis 42:1-43:34**

The famine affects the land of Canaan and Jacob sends Joseph's brothers to buy grain from the Egyptians. Not recognizing Joseph, the brothers deal directly with the estranged Joseph. Over a period of time, the brothers travel back and forth from Canaan to Egypt. Joseph seems to make it difficult on his brothers, but Joseph works it so they never really pay for any of the grain they receive from Egypt.

### **Genesis 45:1-47:12**

Joseph reveals his identity to his brothers and promises prosperity to them. They go get Jacob, and the entire company moves Egypt to be under the protection of Joseph.

### **Genesis 50:15-26**

After their father Jacob dies, the brothers are afraid for their lives thinking that Joseph would now do harm to them because they sold him into slavery. Instead Joseph shows mercy on his brothers. Joseph gives witness to the fact that God has been in the midst of all that has happened.

Joseph said to them, ***"Fear not, for am I in the place of God? As for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today. So do not fear, I will provide for you and your little ones."*** Thus he reassured them, comforted them, and forgave them.

### **Romans 8:28**

This is one of the best known passages in the New Testament. The implications of this verse are far greater than just the ***"working for good"*** in our lives. The passage points to the perfect will of God that is over all creation. We see life through the lenses of our experience, while the purposes of God are often greater than our individual experience. To proclaim ***"all things work together for good,"*** is an act of obedience and faith that God's holy will prevails no matter how unfair things may seem. Joseph is an example of this divine action, as the unjust actions of those around Joseph are used for good.

### **Questions for further reflection**

1. Can you characterize the story of Joseph with one word?
2. How is Joseph's story our story?
3. What is God like in the story?
4. To whom do you best relate in the story – Joseph or his brothers?

---

---

---

---

Next week is July 4th. This service of worship will focus on "God and Country." We are planning a special celebration of worship, with lots of music, recognition of those who serve our country and a sermon focus on the blessings of the freedom to worship God. Bring your neighbors to this unique opportunity to celebrate July 4th in the presence of God!

## **Prayer Focus**

Trietsch is a praying church. This morning, as you worship, one of our prayer volunteers is praying for everyone in each section of our worship center. We believe that prayer changes lives and hearts for good and for God.

We invite you to join these volunteers by praying for those persons around you. We believe these prayers will have an immediate impact on those for whom you are praying.

The following prayers are for inspiration as you pray this week to seek the will of God.

***Remember... someone is praying for you. Have a great week!***

### **Psalm 51** *(Today's New International Version)*

A psalm of David. When the prophet Nathan came to him after David had committed adultery with Bathsheba.

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1 Have mercy on me, O God,<br>according to your unfailing love;<br>according to your great compassion<br>blot out my transgressions.                | 10 Create in me a pure heart, O God,<br>and renew a steadfast spirit within me.  |
| 2 Wash away all my iniquity<br>and cleanse me from my sin.  | 11 Do not cast me from your presence<br>or take your Holy Spirit from me.  |
| 3 For I know my transgressions,<br>and my sin is always before me.  | 12 Restore to me the joy of your salvation<br>and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me.  |
| 4 Against you, you only, have I sinned<br>and done what is evil in your sight;<br>so you are right in your verdict<br>and justified when you judge. | 13 Then I will teach transgressors your ways,<br>and sinners will turn back to you.  |
| 5 Surely I was sinful at birth,<br>sinful from the time my mother conceived me.   | 14 Deliver me from bloodguilt, O God,<br>you who are God my Savior,<br>and my tongue will sing of your righteousness.                          |
| 6 Yet you desired faithfulness even in the womb;<br>you taught me wisdom in that secret place.  | 15 Open my lips, Lord,<br>and my mouth will declare your praise.   |
| 7 Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean;<br>wash me, and I will be whiter than snow.  | 16 You do not delight in sacrifice, or I would bring it;<br>you do not take pleasure in burnt offerings.                                       |
| 8 Let me hear joy and gladness;<br>let the bones you have crushed rejoice.  | 17 My sacrifice, O God, is [b] a broken spirit;<br>a broken and contrite heart<br>you, God, will not despise.                                  |
| 9 Hide your face from my sins<br>and blot out all my iniquity.  | 18 May it please you to prosper Zion,<br>to build up the walls of Jerusalem.   |
|   | 19 Then you will delight in the sacrifices of the righteous,<br>in burnt offerings offered whole;<br>then bulls will be offered on your altar. |

***Invite someone to worship this week. You will be glad you did.  
God is doing great things through the ministry of Trietsch.***