

SEPTEMBER 15, 2024  
SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY  
AFTER PENTECOST



*Followers of Jesus take up the cross.*

### DAILY BIBLE READINGS

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

Sunday	Mark 8:27-38	Taking up the cross
Monday	Isaiah 50:4-9a	God's servant must suffer
Tuesday	James 3:1-12	Controlling the tongue
Wednesday	Acts 17:1-9	Uproar in Thessalonica
Thursday	Isaiah 53:1-12	The suffering servant
Friday	Matthew 18:31-34	Jesus foretells his death
Saturday	Psalms 116:1-9	A prayer of thanksgiving
Sunday	Mark 9:30-37	The servant of all is the greatest

### SCRIPTURE VERSE FOR THIS WEEK

*He [Jesus] called the crowd with his disciples, and said to them, "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me." Mark 8:34 (NRSV)*

### PRAYERS AND BLESSING

#### **A Prayer for the Week:**

Almighty God, we thank you for showing us the depth of your love for us and the power of suffering through the cross of Jesus Christ, the Son of Man. Amen.

#### **Mealtime Prayer:**

Dear God, for the food that refreshes us and the cross that saves us, we give you thanks through Jesus Christ our Savior and Lord. Amen.

#### **A Blessing to Give:**

May the cross of Christ give you peace and hope.



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HYMN OF THE WEEK

*Come, Follow Me, the  
Savior Spake*

### WEEKLY MILESTONES

Take a moment to tell or think about a recent mountain high and/or valley low in your life.

### CARING CONVERSATIONS

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

- Think or tell about a time when you or someone you know suffered rejection.
- How would you describe a follower of Jesus?

### DEVOTIONS

*Read:* Mark 8:27-38.

If you listen to certain people or read writings by some who claim to know what it means to follow Jesus, you might think that discipleship is about power, worldly success, wealth, and health. Those who describe discipleship in this way do not come close to knowing Jesus as the Messiah (Christ). In Mark 8 Jesus tells the crowd, "If any wish to come after me, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me" (v. 34b). This makes it clear that to know Jesus Christ, is to know the path of rejection, suffering, and death. This reading is a difficult one for those who desire to follow Jesus. As painful as Jesus' description is, taking up the cross results in being freed and not feeling ashamed of Jesus' message, especially when we find ourselves among those who do not accept the power of the cross. This good news, the "gospel" (v. 35), frees us to see Jesus as we take up our crosses and leave behind any fear of powers that destroy life, love, and hope.

*Discuss:* How does faith in Jesus Christ free you from your fears?

*Pray:* **Dear God, you who lift up the lowly, we thank you for Jesus who experiences the pain of rejection, suffering, and death that we may know the cross as the path to life and love. Amen.**

### SERVICE

Jesus calls us to serve our neighbor in love. Based on the Daily Bible Readings and theme for this week, how can you help someone who has been rejected by others?

### RITUALS AND TRADITIONS

James 3:1-12 emphasizes that what we say can offer words of encouragement or words that destroy others. Verse 9 encourages us to use our tongues to bless others, not hurt them. Write a list of words or phrases that can be used to encourage others. Think or talk about someone you know who needs to hear words of mercy and kindness and plan to reach out to them.

*Pray:* **Lord God, please help us to use our tongues not to hurt others but to care for others and to thank and praise you. Amen.**



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