

***Together in  
the Word***



*This home devotional tool is designed to facilitate a form of worship that can take place in the home outside of Sunday morning. It is not meant to replace Sunday Worship, but to supplement it, especially as we live in this historical moment with an inability to gather together. Each week's issue will be based on the appointed readings for the previous Sunday in the church year.*

**INVOCATION**

Leader<sup>1</sup>: In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

**Family: Amen.**

**PRAYER FOR GRACE<sup>2</sup> (Morning)**

**Family: O Lord, our heavenly Father, almighty and everlasting God, you have brought us safely to this new day. Defend us with your mighty power, and grant that this day we neither fall into sin nor run into any kind of danger; and in all we do, direct us to what is right in your sight, through Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord. Amen.**

*OR*

**PRAYER FOR PEACE (Evening)**

**Family: Lord God, all holy desires, all good counsels, and all just works come from you. Give to us, your servants, that peace which the world cannot give, that our hearts may be set to obey your commandments. Defend us also from the fear of our enemies that we may live in peace and quietness, through the merits of Jesus Christ our Savior, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.**

**SCRIPTURE:**

*See attached sheet for Scriptures, notes, and devotional questions.*

**PRAYERS:**

*Include prayers for yourself and others, based on what you read and discussed in the Scriptures.*

**BLESSING:**

Leader: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all.

**Family: Amen.**

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<sup>1</sup> In most homes, the head of household will serve as the leader and Scripture reader.

<sup>2</sup> Families may choose either prayer based on which time of day they are using this material.

## THE SCRIPTURES: (WEEK OF LENT 5)

### DAY 1: Ezekiel 37:1-14 (Monday<sup>3</sup>)

The hand of the LORD was on me, and he brought me out by the Spirit of the LORD and set me in the middle of a valley; it was full of bones. <sup>2</sup> He led me back and forth among them, and I saw a great many bones on the floor of the valley, bones that were very dry. <sup>3</sup> He asked me, "Son of man, can these bones live?" I said, "Sovereign LORD, you alone know."

<sup>4</sup> Then he said to me, "Prophecy to these bones and say to them, 'Dry bones, hear the word of the LORD! <sup>5</sup> This is what the Sovereign LORD says to these bones: I will make breath<sup>a</sup> enter you, and you will come to life. <sup>6</sup> I will attach tendons to you and make flesh come upon you and cover you with skin; I will put breath in you, and you will come to life. Then you will know that I am the LORD.'" <sup>7</sup> So I prophesied as I was commanded. And as I was prophesying, there was a noise, a rattling sound, and the bones came together, bone to bone. <sup>8</sup> I looked, and tendons and flesh appeared on them and skin covered them, but there was no breath in them.

<sup>9</sup> Then he said to me, "Prophecy to the breath; prophecy, son of man, and say to it, 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: Come, breath, from the four winds and breathe into these slain, that they may live.'" <sup>10</sup> So I prophesied as he commanded me, and breath entered them; they came to life and stood up on their feet—a vast army. <sup>11</sup> Then he said to me: "Son of man, these bones are the people of Israel. They say, 'Our bones are dried up and our hope is gone; we are cut off.' <sup>12</sup> Therefore prophecy and say to them: 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: My people, I am going to open your graves and bring you up from them; I will bring you back to the land of Israel. <sup>13</sup> Then you, my people, will know that I am the LORD, when I open your graves and bring you up from them. <sup>14</sup> I will put my Spirit in you and you will live, and I will settle you in your own land. Then you will know that I the LORD have spoken, and I have done it, declares the LORD.'" "

### Some Notes:

Israel in exile was as good as dead. Cut off and helpless, the Israelites were not like an army but like a valley full of bones. Yet God promises to bring this nation back to life. In raising Israel from the death of exile, God foreshadowed the great work of Christ: the resurrection of God's people from the dead. Here he speaks to a figuratively dead nation; one day he will speak it literally: I am going to open your graves and bring you up from them. The crown jewel of the kingdom will be given to all who believe—to all who have the Spirit. Reminiscent of the Spirit's first life-giving act on Adam will be the Life-giver's ultimate act on us. God says: I will put my Spirit in you, and you will live.

### Think about it<sup>4</sup>:

1. What does this Word of God teach me?
2. For what does this Word of God lead me to give thanks?
3. What sins does this Word of God lead me to confess?
4. For what does this Word of God lead me to pray?

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<sup>3</sup> The suggested days are just that: suggestions. Your family can use the readings on whichever days you would like.

<sup>4</sup> These questions don't have a right or wrong answer. They are meant to lead us to think about the Scriptures and what they say to us. They are based on Martin Luther's "A Simple Way to Pray" – a letter he wrote to his barber. Simply talk through the questions one at a time, giving each question some time for input from the family.

## **DAY 2: John 11:17-27,38-45 (Tuesday/Wednesday)**

On his arrival, Jesus found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days. <sup>18</sup> Now Bethany was less than two miles from Jerusalem, <sup>19</sup> and many Jews had come to Martha and Mary to comfort them in the loss of their brother. <sup>20</sup> When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went out to meet him, but Mary stayed at home.

<sup>21</sup> “Lord,” Martha said to Jesus, “if you had been here, my brother would not have died. <sup>22</sup> But I know that even now God will give you whatever you ask.”

<sup>23</sup> Jesus said to her, “Your brother will rise again.”

<sup>24</sup> Martha answered, “I know he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day.”

<sup>25</sup> Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; <sup>26</sup> and whoever lives by believing in me will never die. Do you believe this?”

<sup>27</sup> “Yes, Lord,” she replied, “I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, who is to come into the world.”

<sup>38</sup> Jesus, once more deeply moved, came to the tomb. It was a cave with a stone laid across the entrance. <sup>39</sup> “Take away the stone,” he said.

“But, Lord,” said Martha, the sister of the dead man, “by this time there is a bad odor, for he has been there four days.”

<sup>40</sup> Then Jesus said, “Did I not tell you that if you believe, you will see the glory of God?” <sup>41</sup> So they took away the stone. Then Jesus looked up and said, “Father, I thank you that you have heard me. <sup>42</sup> I knew that you always hear me, but I said this for the benefit of the people standing here, that they may believe that you sent me.”

<sup>43</sup> When he had said this, Jesus called in a loud voice, “Lazarus, come out!” <sup>44</sup> The dead man came out, his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen, and a cloth around his face. Jesus said to them, “Take off the grave clothes and let him go.” <sup>45</sup> Therefore many of the Jews who had come to visit Mary, and had seen what Jesus did, believed in him.

### **Some Notes:**

Jesus performed the greatest miracle of his ministry to prove to us the certainty of his greatest promise. Death has hounded mankind since the garden and caused misery that God never intended for his children. When Christ saw the effects of death on his loved ones, he wept with them, but also promised them that one day even this last enemy would be defeated. Martha, too often remembered for her busyness, should be remembered for her confession of faith—so complete, so noble—that encompassed everything Jesus had preached. It even encompassed teachings the disciples struggled to comprehend! She believed in Jesus’ promise of a future resurrection, and so Jesus gave proof to her and to us that his promise is true. By that same faith, the one who is resurrection and life will also give resurrection and life to all who believe.

### **Think about it:**

1. What does this Word of God teach me?
2. For what does this Word of God lead me to give thanks?
3. What sins does this Word of God lead me to confess?
4. For what does this Word of God lead me to pray?

### **Day 3: Romans 8:11-17 (Thursday/Friday)**

And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies because of his Spirit who lives in you.

<sup>12</sup> Therefore, brothers and sisters, we have an obligation—but it is not to the flesh, to live according to it. <sup>13</sup> For if you live according to the flesh, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live.

<sup>14</sup> For those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God. <sup>15</sup> The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship. And by him we cry, “*Abba, Father.*” <sup>16</sup> The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children. <sup>17</sup> Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.

#### **Some Notes:**

The residency of the Spirit within us proves that we possess the resurrection from the dead. If the Spirit is in us, God will most certainly grant true and real life to our mortal bodies. The truth of the Spirit’s living in us that is spoken of in verse 11 is evidenced by our lives. When the Spirit works fruit in our life, he proves to us that he dwells within us. The knowledge of our future glory lets us approach God without fear and bear suffering as children of God and coheirs with Christ.

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