

PRAY EVERY DAY August 16, 2020 Resource

*Seeking God's Mercy and Refuge from Psalm 57:1, NRSV*

Be merciful to me, O God, be merciful to me,  
for in you my soul takes refuge;  
in the shadow of your wings I will take refuge,  
until the destroying storms pass by.

*The Bishop Sharma Lewis Read the Bible in 2020 Challenge*

More resources at [www.vaumc.org/2020BibleChallenge](http://www.vaumc.org/2020BibleChallenge)

July 29 – August 18 “Fruit of the Spirit: Faithfulness”

August 18 – September 8 “Fruit of the Spirit: Gentleness”

August 17: Hebrews 10:19-25

August 21: Proverbs 15:4

August 18: 1 Peter 4:12-19

August 22: 1 Corinthians 4:14-21

August 19: Ephesians 4:1-3

August 23: Philippians 4:4-5

August 20: Proverbs 15:1-2

*Small Group or Personal Study*

Read Matthew 13:47-50.

Use the questions below for small group or personal study:

- In the parable there is a separation of the evil from the good “at the end.” When Jesus is telling the parable he was surrounded by all sorts of people and Jesus did not pull away from the world. Jesus did not pull away from sin but took the sins of the world on himself in the suffering and rejection of the cross. Jesus did not retire to heaven but sent the Holy Spirit to empower disciples of Jesus to go to the world living out the love of God. As followers of Jesus we will be in the world and often especially where there is rejection, suffering, and sin. How is God calling you to connect with community around you at this time?

- There are times Christians are tempted to retreat from the world, or neighbors, or family, or even the church and never go back. When have you felt that way? What was going on?

- There are times to pull away from the world for prayer, worship, sabbath, silence, reflection, healing, and other spiritual practices so we may be renewed to love God and neighbor. If you are in a time of wanting to distance yourself from someone or something at this time, what renewal might you need in Jesus Christ and how might you invite the renewing of the Holy Spirit into your life?

- A natural question this parable raises is, “Who is good and who is bad?” A classic Christian teaching is God is good and though we be marred by sin and mired in it, the grace of God puts forgiveness and goodness on us for living in goodness when we act in the faith and obedience God supplies. In what ways have you been marred by sin or mired in it? In what ways have you seen God’s goodness? Have you put your trust fully in the grace of God’s goodness for the forgiveness of your sins and to empower you for good?

*A Collect*

Almighty God, to you all hearts are open, all desires known, and from you no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy Name; through Christ our Lord. Amen.

*Spend time in silence*  
*Prayer for others and yourself*  
*The Lord's Prayer*

*The Bishop Sharma Lewis Call to Pray at Noon Every Day*

Almighty God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit,

We thank you for your blessings, past, present and future. You are our rock and the source of our hope in all things and at all times. As Jehovah Jireh, our provider God, we ask you this day to stretch out your mighty hand and eradicate from the face of the earth forever this virus called COVID-19 (coronavirus) that is spreading rapidly from continent to continent.

We also pray that you, Jehovah Rapha, our healing God, would place your hand upon all of those who have been stricken by this virus and restore them to full health. Be with those who have lost loved ones and are grieving. Protect all who are caring for those with this virus and keep them from contracting it themselves. Calm our fears and provide us with your peace that surpasses all understanding. Strengthen us with the joy of the Lord and help us to hold firmly to the hope that only you can provide.

Unify us that we, the Virginia Annual Conference, may be able to experience anew the promise of your presence in and through the unity of our faith, hope and trust in you in the days ahead and forever. We offer this prayer in the mighty name of our Lord, Jesus Christ.  
AMEN.

*A Daily Prayer for Racial Justice and Reconciliation*

*(The following prayer is offered by the Bishop's Work Group on Racial Justice and Reconciliation.)*

O loving God,

We give you thanks for creating the world which is full of diversity  
and for making one human family of all the peoples of the earth.

You reign over all the nations and are seated on your holy throne.

You rule over all the peoples without partiality in respect to nations or races  
because righteousness and justice are the foundation of your throne.

Forgive us for the times when we put walls around us with false pride and racial prejudice.

Forgive us for the times when we were silent in the face of racism, private or institutional.

Open our eyes to see Christ who is in people of every nation and every culture.

Break down the walls that separate us. Set us free from fear, hatred and racism.

Bind us together with the unity of God's love. Restore oneness to the family of God.

We pray in the name of Jesus who came, lived and died for all humanity. Amen.

*Share the Love of Jesus because It's All about Relationships*

How will you or how did you share the love of Jesus with neighbor today with no strings attached? Write it down and share about it this week in small group for support and prayer.

*Praying For God's Grace on Earth from Psalm 57:5, NRSV*

Be exalted, O God, above the heavens.

Let your glory be over all the earth.