



Live your faith 17-23 May 2020

Read, pray, reflect at home this week



 This week's Bible readings Acts 17.22-31 • 1 Peter 3.13-22 • John 14.15-21

The Spirit beside us

Notes on the Bible readings

- This passage follows last week's. Jesus expands on what he said about following in his way by explaining how we put the idea into action: by loving Jesus and keeping his commandments.
- This relationship between loving Jesus and keeping his commandments is not a case of 'prove that you love me!'. Rather, it is Jesus explaining how loving him enables us to keep his commandments - a reminder that Jesus' commands are all rooted in a loving relationship: loving God and loving others.
- Jesus also explains that we are not expected to do this on our own; we have the Holy Spirit as our 'advocate'. The Greek word literally means the one 'called to your side' and could equally be translated as 'intercessor', 'counsellor' or 'intermediary'. Crucially, the term means someone who will never desert us in our hour of need. This then flows on naturally to discussing our relationship with Jesus and with the Father; this is all bound up in that oneness with God that ensures that we are not left on our own.

Practical love

The commands that Jesus urges us to keep are practical and everyday in nature. The current lockdown and social distancing rules have resulted in many examples of love in action, and also highlighted situations crying out for love to be expressed in a practical way.

Look (using the internet, perhaps?) for examples in your locality or network of contacts. Can you find one or two ideas to pursue further - either on your own, or as a household?

FREE [worship at home](http://www.rootsontheweb.com) resources, including up-to-the-minute reflection on this week's Bible reading, available at: www.rootsontheweb.com

Questions for reflection

- ▶ How might this image speak of relationship?
- ▶ How easy is it to follow Jesus' command to offer unconditional and practical love, following his example?
- ▶ What sort of things do you regularly do for other people, just because you love them?



A prayer of approach

*Gracious God, we come before you,
drawn by the power of your welcoming love.
We come with our sorrows and joys.
We come with our expectations and apprehensions.
We come with what we have done.
We come as who we are.
In your love we find peace and hope. Amen.*

A prayer for others

*God of love, we are sorry that at times our love for you falters;
that we have wrong priorities, and overlook your guidance.
O God, forgive us and renew us.*

*Loving Saviour, we are sorry that we disobey your commandments;
that we fail to love, and sometimes walk by on the other side.
O God, forgive us and renew us.*

*Spirit of truth, we are sorry that we disregard your presence;
that our thoughts and feelings are unrighteous, and that
we so quickly follow the world's way.
O God, forgive us and renew us.*

*May your presence abiding in us lead us in the right way,
in the name of Jesus. Amen.*

A personal prayer

*I am your child, O God:
Help me always to show love,
and fill me with the Spirit of truth. Amen.*

Live your faith

Wherever you go this week, look for examples of Jesus' command being fulfilled, and opportunities to demonstrate love in action. If you can, do it.



Dear Friends,

This week we near the culmination of the Easter season as we celebrate Ascension Day on Thursday – forty days after Easter. For many it is a day that just passes by, and even in the Church's calendar it seems to be given only a cursory nod. Yet, this is a day of high importance for Christians, when again both sides of this Jesus are seen in dramatic form – both the human and the divine. It is the point when his physical body is taken up into heaven, and

again a great commission is given to his disciples in the promise from him that the Holy Spirit would come upon them. In churches of a more catholic tradition, Ascension Day is regarded as a day of obligation - a day when all were expected to go to Holy Communion, and take a day of rest. I remember well, being at Secondary School (which was a Church of England school) and always having Ascension Day off. I also remember going to Holy Communion at my church in the evening, and there would be five of us if we were lucky. I think it is necessary for us to re-examine the importance of this day in our liturgical calendar, because here we see a transfer of power.

For example, every time a new Prime Minister takes up office, or a company gets a new CEO, or a new Head Teacher takes over in a school, there is a transfer of power. In less formal ways, a transfer of power happens when a patient gives him or herself over to medical staff for their care, or when a parent entrusts a chore to a child. In the Ascension Day Gospel (ref. below), Jesus is transferring power to his disciples. In essence he says, I can't stay here, but neither can you; as I go *out* of the world, you must go *into* the world. And further still, his transfer of power is actually the transfer of himself to us in the Spirit. We accept Jesus' transfer of power when we make these kinds of choices: to forgive others and to trust that others will forgive us, to extend a healing hand to others and to ask for others' help when we need healing, to encourage others to develop their God-given gifts, to lead others to encounter Jesus, to pray for others, to preach the word, to stand up for justice, to donate time and talent to charity. Indeed, all these and other saving actions are the work of the Spirit – Jesus' risen presence dwelling within us. I think that is worth marking on Ascension Day. For those who can access it there will be a service of Holy Communion this coming Thursday on our Youtube channel. For others, please spend this special day reflecting and praying on how Jesus has transferred his power to us, and how we can best use that power for the good of all, and in bringing in the Kingdom of God. God Bless, Rob.

Daily Readings for week commencing 18th May		
Monday	Numbers 16: 1-35	Luke 6: 27-38
Tuesday	Numbers 16: 36-end	Luke 6: 39-end
Wednesday	Numbers 17: 1-11	Luke 7: 1-10
Thursday	Acts 1: 1-11	Luke 24: 44-en Ascension Day
Friday	Numbers 20: 1-13	Luke 7: 11-17
Saturday	Numbers 21: 4-9	Luke 7: 18-35

Pray for those in need... Sally Bozward, Katie-Louise Sweetlove, Pam Pincott, Sue Gilchrist, Bryn Roberts, Evelyn Clarke, Shane Williams, Pat Williams, Heather Elsdon, Dorothy Goodwin, Lily.
The departed... Brian Tansell, Pauline Battersea, Ibbey Watson, Ron Beatson, Joyce Holton, Terry Jauncey and Ann Jones