

Faith Family Worship Guide – Week 15

MEMORIZE

- For those with 1st-5th graders at Brook Hills, focus on the verses that they are memorizing in Children’s Ministry for this unit, from now through the end of April.
 - 1st Grade – John 10:11, 27-29
 - 2nd Grade – Romans 10:9-11
 - 3rd Grade – Revelation 21:3-5
 - 4th Grade – Colossians 1:13-14
 - 5th Grade – Philippians 2:4-8

READ

As our church reads through the Bible for the next two years, each day will include a chapter from both the Old Testament and the New Testament. As a family, decide if you want to read one or both of these passages. The Faith Family Worship Guide will look ahead to the readings for the upcoming week.

Read: Psalm 22:1-21; Matthew 27:46

Questions:

- How should we respond if we feel as though God has abandoned us?
- According to Scripture, what is true about God when we feel that way?
- Why does God allow His people to suffer?
- How does Psalm 22 point to Christ?

Bottom Line: In hard times, Christ-followers can remember God’s character and His faithfulness to His people as they pray to Him about their circumstances.

SUGGESTIONS

These suggestions were created by the age-group ministry leaders as a way to help parents better communicate the biblical truths discussed in the Family Worship Guide. These suggestions are intended to help parents facilitate God-centered discussions with their children throughout the week (at the dinner table, in the car, during a family worship time, etc.).

Preschool

- Who knows everything?
- Does everything happen as God says it will?
- Does God always keep His promises?
- What do you know about God? He is faithful. He always does what He says.
- Is anything too hard for God?
- Are you sad or worried about anything?
- In sad or hard times, who is always there for you?

Children

- Read Psalm 22:1-21. Re-read verse 1. How do you think King David (who wrote this Psalm) was feeling at this moment? (He was likely feeling abandoned.)
- Have you ever felt like God has abandoned you? Does God ever really abandon us? No! Read Deuteronomy 31:6, Joshua 1:5, and Psalm 27:28. All of these verses remind us that God never leaves us nor forsakes us. Even if we can’t feel him there, even in the hard times, He is always with us and He has a plan we can trust.
- How should we respond when times are hard and we can’t feel God? Read through Psalm 22:2-21 again and show how King David responded (see commentary below for details).
- In addition to King David expressing how he was feeling, who else are these verses describing? (Jesus’ crucifixion)
- Read Matthew 27:46. Who is saying these words? (Jesus, while He was on the cross). Explain how when he said these words, he was pointing us back to King David’s prophecy in Psalm 22. Revel in amazement at how God used King David to prophecy about the details of Jesus crucifixion, long before Jesus was ever born!
- Pray and thank God for Jesus, and for loving us so much that He promises He will never leave us nor forsake us. Pray and

ask Him to help you trust Him even in the hard times.

Students

- Read the passages above and then work through the following questions.
- In both of these passages someone felt abandoned by God. Why do you think these kinds of passages are included in Scripture?
- Do you find it odd that Jesus even felt “forsaken”?
- In writing Psalm 22 David initially felt abandoned by God, but what other truths did you see that he pointed out?
- At the end of the Psalm David begins to praise God. Why?
- Read Philippians 4:6-8 together.
- What are some practical things that Paul encourages us to do when we face times where we feel abandoned by God or struggle with doubt?
- Have each member of the family write down at least one area of their lives where they are struggling to see God’s faithfulness. Ask each person if they will commit to both pray for and reflect on God’s prior faithfulness in their lives. During your next family worship time, have each person share how they feel about that issue, and ask how you can be praying for one another in regard to that issue.

SING

While suffering is a normal part of the Christian experience, God’s Word assures us that we are never without hope. Even in the darkest moments of despair, we can rest in the objective assurance of Christ’s saving work and future return. As we continue in worship, let’s join in singing “It Is Well”. Penned in 1873 by Horatio Spafford, this classic hymn points to Jesus as the all-sufficient anchor for our souls. The second verse reads:

*Though Satan should buffet, though trials should come
Let this blest assurance control
That Christ hath regarded my helpless estate
And hath shed His own blood for my soul*

Praise the Lord that we can rest in the salvation of Christ!

Visit our website for a link to this song: www.brookhills.org/gathering/this_week.html.

WHERE WE ARE IN THE STORY

Readings for April 14-20

Leviticus 18-24 and Psalm 22-31

Where We Are In The Story (Old Testament)

Background of Leviticus: Everything in Leviticus points to the holiness of God. His perfection and man’s sinfulness stands as the reason for all of the sacrifices, laws, and regulations included in this book, for Leviticus explains how a covenant between a righteous God and a sinful people practically plays out in everyday life in the era before Christ’s resurrection. Written by Moses as Israel wandered in the wilderness, it contains divine speeches that Moses delivered to the people of Israel about how to worship God and how they should live. Modern readers of Leviticus may tire of reading the many laws and regulations, but for Israelites in the Old Testament era, Leviticus provided relevant information for how they were to go about their day-to-day lives.

Structure of Leviticus:

- Leviticus 1-7 explain the rituals of the different sacrifices.
- Leviticus 8-10 give instructions for the priests of Israel.
- Leviticus 11-15 instruct the people on cleansing and purification.
- Leviticus 16 details the sacrifice and instructions for the Day of Atonement.
- Leviticus 17-27 provide directions regarding the festivals, the holy days, and how the people should live.

This Week in Leviticus: Leviticus 18-20 contain instructions regarding ethics in everyday life. In these three chapters, God emphasizes the expectation that those who follow Him will be holy as He is holy (Lev. 19:2; 20:26), which is the central

theme of Leviticus, and these three chapters give specifics regarding what a holy lifestyle looks like, particularly with regard to sex, idolatry, and our treatment of others. He instructs the people to live a life different than the Egyptians and the Canaanites (Lev. 18:3), and this principle of holiness applies to believers today (1 Pet. 1:16). Throughout these three chapters, God reiterates the reason for the commands – “I am the LORD your God.” This statement points to their covenant with God, how they owe their creation as a nation to Him, and His own moral character and standards. Our obedience should stem from a reverence for who God is and from gratitude and love for Him.

Leviticus 21-22 instruct the priests how to live and how to serve as servant leaders for the Lord, and Leviticus 23 describes the festivals and holy days that God prescribes the people to celebrate. These holy days include: the Sabbath, the Passover, the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the Feast of Firstfruits, the Feast of Weeks, the Feast of Trumpets, the Day of Atonement, and the Feast of Booths. These feasts and holy days taught the people that all that they have belongs to God, and they provided opportunities to remember and to praise God for what He has done. These national festivals and holy days also maintained the nation as a *community* of believers,

- From sunset on Friday to sunset on Saturday, the Jews were to keep the **Sabbath**. This was the sign of their covenant with God (Ex. 31:13). For the Israelites, the Sabbath served as a commemoration of God’s work in creation as well as His work of redemption in delivering them from bondage in Egypt (Dt. 5:12-15). While it was a day of rest, its purpose was for worship and spiritual service, not personal pleasure.
- Exodus 12-13 contain instructions for celebrating the **Passover** and the **Feast of Unleavened Bread**. The Passover celebrated God’s redemption of His people from slavery in Egypt, and the Feast of Unleavened Bread reminded the people that God expects the redeemed to pursue purity and to purge the sin from their lives, to live in light of their redemption. The Feast of Unleavened Bread also fell at the first harvest of the year in the spring.
- With the **Feast of Firstfruits**, the people gave thanks to God and offered their first and best to Him. This offering also represented faith that God would continue to provide for His people, and it points to Jesus’ resurrection since He was the firstfruits of the dead (see 1 Cor.15:20).
- The New Testament refers to the **Feast of Weeks** as **Pentecost**, and it occurred fifty days after Passover when the wheat crop ripened. The people would each bring two loaves of bread baked with leaven and give thanks for the Lord’s provision in the harvest. As an expression of their gratitude, the people were to leave part of their harvest for the poor to glean and to eat.
- The **Feast of Trumpets** took place in the fall and marked the end of the harvest season. Trumpet blasts announced the beginning of this memorial, and the people were to present a food offering to God and to rest from work. The people would celebrate the Feast of Trumpets, the Day of Atonement, and the Feast of Booths in succession since the month of Tishri included all three of these occasions. This feast called the people to rest from their labors and to worship the Lord.
- Leviticus 16 describes the **Day of Atonement**, and on this day, sacrifices were made in order to wipe the slate clean with regard to the people’s sin. This day illustrated that fellowship with God cannot take place unless sin is removed, and sin cannot be removed without the shedding of blood from God’s appointed sacrifice.
- The **Feast of Booths** (a.k.a. Feast of Tabernacles) commemorated how God provided for His people in the wilderness wanderings, so during this feast, the people lived in temporary dwellings or shelters. Afterwards, they rejoiced at not having to live that way before since God had given them the Promised Land. This feast also served as a time of thanksgiving to God for the provision of crops that year, specifically in the fall harvest, and a time to pray for God’s continued provision by sending rain in the winter.

Background & Structure of Psalms: God used many different writers to write Psalms: David, Moses, the sons of Korah, Asaph, etc. The book is arranged in five parts, and this arrangement occurred after the people of Israel returned to the land after the Babylonian exile. A doxology concludes each book or arrangement of psalms (Psalm 41:13 for Book 1, Psalm 72:18-19 for Book 2, Psalm 89:52 for Book 3, Psalm 106:48 for Book 4, and Psalm 150:6 for Book 5), and the entire book of Psalms climactically ends with a grand doxology of several psalms (Ps. 146-150).

- Book 1: Psalms 1-41
- Book 2: Psalms 42-72
- Book 3: Psalms 73-89
- Book 4: Psalms 90-106
- Book 5: Psalms 107-150

This Week in Psalms: This week's readings contain two well-known and beloved psalms, Psalm 22 and Psalm 23. **Psalm 22** depicts the King David's dilemma in reconciling the nature of God with His actions and what He permits to happen, even to His own people. King David's response to his unanswered prayers provides instruction for God's people as they attempt to navigate through times when they *feel* unheard or forsaken by God. Despite how he felt in his situation, the psalmist persevered in prayer (v. 1), remembered God's character (v. 3), recounted God's faithfulness to His people in the past (vv. 4-5), reflected on God's faithfulness in his own life (vv. 9-10), praised God for His response to the psalmist's prayers (vv. 25-30), and exhorted others to glorify God (v. 23).

This psalm also contains **typology**, which is an indirect prophecy. This means that the Holy Spirit led King David to write in such a way about his own circumstances that they would also become true in the suffering and death of Jesus Christ. The psalm foreshadows what would happen with Christ, but when King David penned Psalm 22, his words had more significance than *he* intended. For example, David would not have known to write about the Messiah being pierced in His hands and feet (v. 16) because crucifixion was a Roman form of execution, and the Roman Empire did not even exist during the reign of King David. Psalm 22 also contains typological references to the Roman soldiers casting lots for Jesus' clothes (Ps. 22:18; Jn. 19:14), the mocking of Jesus (Ps. 22:7; Mt. 27:39), and Jesus' thirst on the cross (Ps. 22:15; Jn. 19:28). Hebrews 2:12 also quotes Psalm 22:22 when it places the now exalted Jesus as the one offering praises before the congregation of believers.

On Good Friday, Christ quoted the first line of this psalm on the cross: "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" However, Jesus was not asking God to explain the reason for His abandonment, for Christ knew why He was on the cross. In stating the first line of Psalm 22, Christ was appropriating the *entire* psalm and relating it to His experience – the confidence in the Lord, the petitions for deliverance, the deliverance from the suffering, and the glory given to God. Jesus prayed for deliverance in the Garden of Gethsemane, yet He died. He who is righteous prayed a prayer that went unanswered, yet Hebrews 5:7 explains, "In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to him who was able to save him from death, **and he was heard** because of his reverence." The Father heard the cries of the Son. God heard His prayers, but He chose to answer Him at a different time and in a better way. God had delivered David from dying, but he chose to deliver Christ through death. Furthermore, through the cross and the resurrection Christ became the source of eternal salvation for all who repent and believe in him as Lord (Heb. 5:9). We can be saved from the punishment we deserve for our sin! Jesus' death is substitutionary. He was abandoned for us, so we will never be abandoned. He will never leave us or forsake us because He has already been forsaken.

Psalm 23 exudes confidence in the Lord, and it includes three scenes: a pasture with a shepherd and his sheep (vv. 1-4), a lavish banquet (v. 5), and the sanctuary of the Lord (v. 6). By comparing the Lord to a shepherd, the psalmist emphasizes the Lord's role in caring for His people. This does not mean that God's people get everything they want or even everything they physically need, for God does permit people – including His followers – to suffer. The provision mentioned by the psalmist is likely spiritual nourishment and spiritual growth, which aligns with Jesus' instructions to Peter in John 21 to "feed my sheep" (Jn. 21:16). There is no lack in the Lord's care (v. 1), and He also provides restoration and refreshment for His people (vv. 2-3), leads them in the way of righteousness (v. 3), and protects them (v. 4). Therefore, God's people need not fear any evil or calamity because they have the promise of God's presence (v. 4). With the banquet scene, the psalmist addresses God directly (v. 4), expresses trust in the Lord and in His protection despite the presence of his enemies (v. 4), and acknowledges God's gracious hospitality and care (v. 5). The psalm concludes with the psalmist's explicit desire to commune with God (v. 6), for his reflection on God's character increased his affections for the Lord and stirred his desire to return to the sanctuary, where God made His presence known in that era of history.