

SEPTEMBER 7, 2025  
THIRTEENTH SUNDAY  
AFTER PENTECOST



*Following Jesus is important and demanding.*

### DAILY BIBLE READINGS

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

Sunday	Luke 14:25-33	The cost of being a disciple
Monday	Deuteronomy 30:15-20	Choose life, not death
Tuesday	Philemon 1:1-21	Philemon's love and faith
Wednesday	Isaiah 57:14-21	A promise of health and healing
Thursday	John 15:12-17	Love one another
Friday	Philippians 2:12-18	Shining as lights in the world
Saturday	Psalms 1	The way to happiness
Sunday	Luke 15:1-10	The lost sheep and the lost coin

### SCRIPTURE VERSE FOR THIS WEEK

*I call heaven and earth to witness against you today that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Choose life so that you and your descendants may live. Deuteronomy 30:19 (NRSV)*

### PRAYERS AND BLESSING

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

Creator God, your ways bring life, love, and hope; help us to follow your ways that our lives may flourish, and our acts of love serve others through Jesus Christ. Amen.

#### **Mealtime Prayer:**

Dear God, may your life-giving gift of food remind us of your love and faithfulness that makes all the difference for our daily lives. In Jesus' name, amen.

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

Grace and peace to you from God the Creator and the Lord Jesus Christ. (Philemon 1:3)



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### HYMN OF THE WEEK

*O, That the Lord Would  
Guide My Ways*



### 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:

- What does it mean to you to “follow the crowd”?
- How does following God's ways help you? How does it challenge you?

### DEVOTIONS

*Read:* Luke 14:25-33 and Deuteronomy 30:15-20.

The way of discipleship is demanding. In Luke, Jesus makes drastic demands of those who want to follow him. Deuteronomy makes a similar demand. Either you follow the ways of God and live or you follow false gods and die. Dramatic and clear? Yes! Deuteronomy was written with the people of the Babylonian captivity in mind. The enslaved people in Babylon had not followed God by adhering to the commandments, decrees, and ordinances. The people were given a new chance to make the right choice. God's word is to be taken with all seriousness. This message is to be heard by us now as well. There are real consequences for not having the right priorities in life, including the importance of following Jesus completely. God's eternal grace does not diminish the importance of being a disciple of Jesus. Following Jesus, however imperfectly, does not wipe out the power of grace that gives us a new beginning each and every day.

*Discuss:* What do you think makes following Jesus difficult?

*Pray:* **Almighty God, your ways lead to life; give us courage to place our trust in Jesus that we may pick up our crosses and experience life with grace and mercy now and always. 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 needs a second chance?

### RITUALS AND TRADITIONS

Paul wrote to his friend Philemon: “*When I remember you in my prayers, I always thank my God because I hear of your love for all the saints and your faith toward the Lord Jesus*” (Philemon 1:4-5). This love was a gracious gift of God. Write a list of those from whom you have received the gracious gift of God's love. Send them a note, email, or text giving thanks for them for being part of your life.

