

Sunday's

READINGS

Genesis 3:9–15

2 Corinthians 4:13–5:1

Mark 3:20–35

Scan the code to read
today's readings. ➔



Opening PRAYER

Dear Jesus, we are careful to weigh where we put our trust in human relationships. Give us the wisdom to recognize that evil deceives us. Help us to place our trust in you alone. Amen.



Thoughts for REFLECTION

Do you hear the Father's voice in Genesis as an angry, vengeful one? Or, do you hear the voice of a parent who laments at the gravely wrong choice a child has made?

Why does God value our free will so much that he will not violate it, even for our own good?

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What You NEED to KNOW

Scripture Background

Genesis 3:9–15

This first reading from Genesis immediately follows the creation stories. It is in the part of the Old Testament that we call pre-history. The narratives before the introduction of Abraham are symbol stories. There are no literal words that can hold the fullness of what God is communicating. God's truth in these verses is clear. God creates us in his image and loves us completely. Humanity chooses to seek happiness and love outside of our relationship with God, only to discover they do not exist. The tone in which you hear God's voice shapes the way you will understand your own relationship with him. God allows the consequences of our action. Sometimes, those consequences are evil, suffering, and death. God did not intend for us to experience them. Our free will led to them. Through God's love, we will find redemption in Christ.

2 Corinthians 4:13–5:1

Saint Paul counsels the Corinthians that God has taken evil straight on "knowing that the one who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus and place us with you in his presence" (4:13). The death

that Paul speaks of is the final breath that takes us into eternal life. But, he continues to speak of the way our outer self (who we are outside of our relationship with God), our inner self (who we are in Christ), will bring abundant life. Jesus broke the chains of evil that bind us. He offers us new life.

Mark 3:20–35

Though this passage is only in Chapter 3 of Mark's Gospel, we have already seen or heard of Jesus casting out demons several times. We are told that even Jesus' family is concerned about him. They are deeply aware that the Romans hate crowds and that the scribes are suspicious of Jesus' power. The scribes claim that the power comes from Beelzebul. The Jews used this term to ridicule the God of the Canaanites, Baal. Jesus uses the name *Satan*, which is most directly translated as "deceiver" or "adversary of God." This Gospel reading connects to this Sunday's First Reading, as it is the snake who tempts Adam and Eve through deceit. In his parable, Jesus likens himself to the one who plunders. He is mightier than the strong man (the deceiver). He is establishing God's Kingdom.

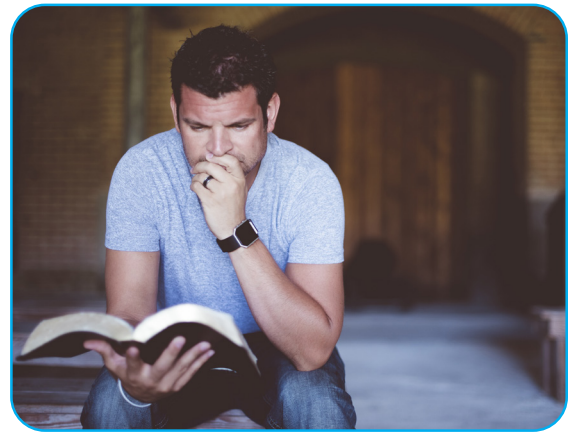


Points to Ponder

Absolute Love

Our image of God is the accumulation of all that we have seen and heard from others. While God has planted in us a desire for a relationship with him, how we see him is often determined by the people in our lives who are closest to us. It is refined as we develop through our religious upbringing and the experience of other people's thoughts and actions. Your relationship with God has everything to do with who you believe God is. Are you afraid of God's anger or are you sorry that you have not done the most loving thing? The gift of Jesus and the grace of the Holy Spirit help us understand the revelation that the Father is complete and absolute love. God cannot love you more tomorrow than he does today.

- How does that last statement make you feel?
- Have you learned about and prayed with Scripture in a way that helps you to understand how God speaks to us in his living Word?



Lord Jesus, you are truly present, Amen!

As two pieces of wax fused together make one, so he who receives Holy Communion is so united with Christ that Christ is in him and he is in Christ.

—Saint Cyril of Alexandria

Strengthen belief in the True Presence of Jesus in the Eucharist. Visit the Pflaum Eucharist resources page.



Connecting **GOSPEL**

and CHURCH TEACHING

Study of Scripture

If you were surprised or even shocked to read that the stories of Adam and Eve are symbol stories, you may want to include Scripture study in your faith journey. In a Church document on Scripture called *"The Word of God in the Life and Mission of the Church,"* we hear that "every Christian is invited through the words of Sacred Scripture to discover the Word of God (cf. 2 Cor. 4:4). This takes place through a demanding, patient, and ongoing process, involving historical-critical study...the application of every scientific and literary

method available...and research from the vantage point of literature" (Preface). The understanding of the time and culture when a passage was written, the use of literary devices, the life situation of the community, and the insight from the study of the language in which it was written all need to be applied to the text. Only then will we hear the inspired truth of God reaching to us from generation to generation through the power of the Holy Spirit.

➔ To learn more, refer to CCC, 702–714 or go to Booklet 3, Session 4 in Growing Faith.



Closing PRAYER

Through your Word given to us today, O God, you have reminded us of the power of the deceiver. Send your Spirit upon us that we may seek only your truth as we desire to live in response to the abundance of your love. Amen.

FAMILY CORNER

Scan here for parent resources. ➔



Question of the Week

Why does the Bible matter in our friendship with God?



Family Prayer

Holy Spirit, help us to love your Word. Amen.