



Word of God Word of Life

A Commitment to living with the Scriptures Together
September 2018 – May 2019

Blessed Lord, who caused all holy Scriptures to be written for our learning: Grant us so to hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, that we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life, which you have given us in our Savior Jesus Christ; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

(Prayer of the Day from the *Book of Common Prayer* for the Sunday closest to November 16)

Our remaining focus Scripture passages for 2018-19 are:

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| • Isaiah 43:1-7 | November | (Protection) |
| • Luke 1:26-56 | December | (Incarnation) |
| • Romans 8:14-39 | January | (Children of God) |
| • Luke 9:28-36 | February | (Transfiguration) |
| • Philippians 2:1-11 | March | (Lent) |
| • Luke 24:1-51 | April | (Easter) |
| • Psalm 104 | May | (Care of Creation) |

In this initiative we are confident that our still-speaking God will bless our efforts to hear, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest God's Word of Life.

Word of God - Word of Life

Isaiah 43:1-7

“Called By Name – God’s Very Own”

Isaiah 40 – 55 seems to be addressed to the exiles in Babylon after the forced deportations in 597 and 587 BCE. The poet/prophet responds to several troubling concerns. Among them are:

- Why did this calamity happen? Isaiah 42:24-25
- What about the promise to David that his dynasty would last forever? Psalm 89 reflects the people’s agony over this issue.
- Are the “gods” in this far away country more powerful than the Lord? Is the Lord even present here? Isaiah 40:18-31
- Will there be a return/restoration? Isaiah 40:1-11
- Does God still have a purpose for his chosen people? Isaiah 42:6-7 and 49:6-7

The prophet, using images of a second Exodus and a restored creation, insists on the unique glory and faithfulness of God who will protect God’s beloved people all the way back to Judea.

The writer also addresses the mystery of suffering, insisting that it is never the last word. In fact, in some instances suffering is redeeming and restorative.

Some points to ponder/treasure as we listen to *our still speaking God* through Isaiah 43:1-7, first addressed to refugees in exile:

- How are you able to hear God call your name in love and invitation?
- Verses 5 and 6 depict an awesome homecoming. Who would you want included in this great ingathering?
- In verse 7 we are called, created, formed and made for what purpose? How is that true of your life? In what ways is that being lived out in our congregation? How are the ingathering and God’s glory connected?
- How do you respond to the claim (verse 4) that we are precious, honored and loved by God? Gratitude, doubt, joy, confusion, guilt, inspiration, longing, and reassurance are all appropriate in our faith journey.

