



Approaching God

Begin your time with an opening prayer

Take a moment to quiet your heart and ask God to help you experience his presence today. Ask Him to free you from any distractions as you begin to read and meditate on today's passages.

Bible Reading, Study & Meditation - Slowly Read the Following Passages

Start with Engaging the Text: Take a few minutes to highlight, circle, or underline key words.

Exodus 23:4-5

4 “If you come across your enemy’s ox or donkey wandering off, be sure to return it. **5** If you see the donkey of someone who hates you fallen down under its load, do not leave it there; be sure you help them with it.

Luke 6:27-36

27 “But to you who are listening I say: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, **28** bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. **29** If someone slaps you on one cheek, turn to them the other also. If someone takes your coat, do not withhold your shirt from them. **30** Give to everyone who asks you, and if anyone takes what belongs to you, do not demand it back. **31** Do to others as you would have them do to you. **32** “If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners love those who love them. **33** And if you do good to those who are good to you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners do that. **34** And if you lend to those from whom you expect repayment, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, expecting to be repaid in full. **35** But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High, because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked. **36** Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.

John 18:15-18

15 Simon Peter and another disciple were following Jesus. Because this disciple was known to the high priest, he went with Jesus into the high priest’s courtyard, **16** but Peter had to wait outside at the door. The other disciple, who was known to the high priest, came back, spoke to the servant girl on duty there and brought Peter in. **17** “You aren’t one of this man’s disciples too, are you?” she asked Peter. He replied, “I am not.” **18** It was cold, and the servants and officials stood around a fire they had made to keep warm. Peter also was standing with them, warming himself.

Thoughts to Ponder - Making Room for The Poor

Read the short essay from John Greco - <https://hereadstruth.com/2019/05/10/making-room-for-your-betrayers/>

In books and movies, we expect the good guys to win—to overthrow, conquer, crush, or otherwise demolish the story’s evildoers. There are exceptions, of course, but this is the general rule. It’s even in the Bible. Before we can get through a full three chapters of Genesis, God declares that the offspring of the woman will one day crush the head of the serpent (Genesis 3:15). Because our God is perfectly just and perfectly righteous, we know instinctively that no wicked deed should go unpunished and that good ought to triumph in the end.

But what about those stories that go beyond good vanquishing evil? I’m thinking of Luke Skywalker, who offered a new beginning to Darth Vader, even as the dark lord threatened to murder him. Or there’s Bilbo Baggins, who pitied the ring-crazed Gollum, refusing to kill the twisted creature. And how many times has Superman saved Lex Luthor from certain death?

There is a goodness that surpasses mere victory over evil, and it smells a lot like the gospel. To be sure, God will one day destroy evil, fully and finally, but in the meantime He offers salvation to people in rebellion. No one is too far gone. No one is beyond hope. And God is patient. He holds out an open hand to lost men and women, many of whom would spit in His face if given the chance (see Matthew 26:67; 27:30; Luke 23:34), “not wanting any to perish but all to come to repentance” (2 Peter 3:9).

One of my favorite scenes in the Gospels is recorded in John 13. Jesus rises from the Last Supper, ties a towel around His waist, and begins washing each of His disciples’ feet. In the ancient world, the task of washing feet was reserved for the lowliest of servants. That’s because on those dusty roads, it was often hard to tell where the dirt ended and the animal waste began—and people walked just about everywhere. By selflessly scrubbing those one hundred and twenty filthy toes, Jesus left His friends (and us) an example to follow: we are to love one another.

But love is not reserved only for our friends. Jesus washed Peter’s feet, and John’s, and James’s, and worked His way down the line. At some point, He was face to feet with Judas, the disciple who would betray Him to the Jewish authorities in just a short while. And still, He washed dirt and grime from the traitor’s feet, knowing full well what evil was lurking in his heart (John 13:2–3,18–21).

True love is not conditional. It is not a reward for good behavior. This is why Jesus could teach, “Love your enemies, do what is good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you... Then your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High. For he is gracious to the ungrateful and evil. Be merciful, just as your Father also is merciful” (Luke 6:27–28,35–36). We ought to love our betrayers and those who seek to do us harm, not because we can easily brush aside the pain they cause, but because our hope lies in a God who did not count our sins against us. He chose to love us, knowing full well the evil lurking in our hearts when we were far from Him. “We love because he first loved us” (1 John 4:19).

Daily Reflection Questions

1. What do today’s passages say about making room for those who have betrayed us?
2. How can we make room for our betrayers?

Close in Prayer:

Ask God to bring to mind anyone you may have let down, shamed, or hurt in anyway. Ask God to help you reconcile with that person and ask forgiveness in a way that honors Christ.