

AUGUST 20, 2023  
TWELFTH SUNDAY  
AFTER PENTECOST



*God blesses us to go into the world with mercy.*

### DAILY BIBLE READINGS

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

Sunday	Matthew 15:10-28	A woman's faith
Monday	Isaiah 56:1, 6-8	God's saving power is everywhere
Tuesday	Romans 11:1-2a, 29-32	God saves Jews and Gentiles
Wednesday	Jude 1:17-23	Warnings and exhortations
Thursday	Jeremiah 42:7-17	The Lord will grant you mercy
Friday	Deuteronomy 4:25-31	Moses commands obedience
Saturday	Psalms 67	Tell the nations to praise God
Sunday	Matthew 16:13-20	Peter's confession of Christ

### SCRIPTURE VERSE FOR THIS WEEK

*May God be gracious to us and bless us and make his face to shine upon us, (Selah) that your way may be known upon earth, your saving power among all nations. Psalm 67:1-2 (NRSV)*

### PRAYERS AND BLESSING

#### A Prayer for the Week:

Merciful God, you have chosen us and blessed us to bless the world. Give us compassionate hearts to do your will through Jesus Christ our Savior and Lord. Amen.

#### Mealtime Prayer:

Dear God, for blessing us with the fruitfulness of the earth that gives us food each day we give you thanks through Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Amen.

#### A Blessing to Give:

May God be gracious to you and bless you for the sake of the whole world. (Psalm 67:1-2)



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HYMN OF THE WEEK  
*Great Is Thy Faithfulness*



### 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:

- How have you been blessed by others?
- How have you blessed others with the love of God?

### DEVOTIONS

Read: Psalm 67.

God's mercy is shown through two distinct divine actions. First, God saves us through forgiveness, rescuing us from harm, and by saving us from death. God does a second great act that we sometimes overlook. God blesses us. God blesses us with the fruit of the earth, comfort, and joy. Psalm 67 asks for God's blessings and also affirms that God has already blessed us with abundance. God intends joy for all the earth (all the nations). We are blessed to bless the nations with joy and gladness by knowing the goodness, justice, and mercy of God. In Matthew 15:21-28 that joy is experienced by the Canaanite woman, a foreigner, who is relentless in seeking help for her daughter. Jesus, who was sent "to the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (v. 24) resists her requests, but her persistence gains Jesus' mercy. She is acknowledged for having great faith and Jesus' mission expands to those beyond Israel. The point of both Bible texts: God's saving work and blessings are for all.

Discuss: Like the Canaanite woman, when have you persisted in asking for God's mercy?

Pray: **Blessing God, you care for us throughout our lives. Give us your joy and gladness and the heart to bless others with your goodness and mercy through our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.**

### SERVICE

Jesus calls us to serve our neighbor in love. Based on the Daily Bible Readings for this week, how might you serve others who are not part of your group or nation?

### RITUALS AND TRADITIONS

The prophet Isaiah declared God's intention to make God's house (a temple in Jerusalem) a "house of prayer for all peoples" (Isaiah 56:7). Think or talk about prayer in your home. Is there a special place to pray? Is there a special time to pray? Is there a special way to pray? Do you pray alone or with others? In what ways do you feel your own home is a "house of prayer"? Pray the Lord's Prayer and then say: **Let the peoples praise you, O God. Let all the peoples praise you.** (Psalm 67:5)



In addition to *Taking Faith Home*, celebrate milestones in your daily life as an effective faith formation tool. Go to: [www.milestonesministry.org](http://www.milestonesministry.org)