

## CHRIST CHURCH SMALL GROUPS

### Lectionary Readings for the Weekend of May 5, 2024 – The Sixth Sunday of Easter, Year B



**Instruction:** Small Groups are encouraged to read each text and use the discussion questions for further conversation and growth.

#### The Collect

O God, you have prepared for those who love you such good things as surpass our understanding; Pour into our hearts such love towards you, that we, loving you in all things and above all things, may obtain your promises, which exceed all that we can desire; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

#### The First Reading | Acts 10:44-48

While Peter was still speaking, the Holy Spirit fell upon all who heard the word. The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astounded that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles, for they heard them speaking in tongues and extolling God. Then Peter said, “Can anyone withhold the water for baptizing these people who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?” So he ordered them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they invited him to stay for several days.

#### The Psalm | Psalm 98

- <sup>1</sup> Sing to the Lord a new song, for he has done marvelous things.
- <sup>2</sup> With his right hand and his holy arm has he won for himself the victory.
- <sup>3</sup> The Lord has made known his victory; his righteousness has he openly shown in the sight of the nations.
- <sup>4</sup> He remembers his mercy and faithfulness to the house of Israel,  
and all the ends of the earth have seen the victory of our God.
- <sup>5</sup> Shout with joy to the Lord, all you lands; lift up your voice, rejoice, and sing.
- <sup>6</sup> Sing to the Lord with the harp, with the harp and the voice of song.
- <sup>7</sup> With trumpets and the sound of the horn shout with joy before the King, the Lord.
- <sup>8</sup> Let the sea make a noise and all that is in it, the lands and those who dwell therein.
- <sup>9</sup> Let the rivers clap their hands, and let the hills ring out with joy before the Lord, when he comes to judge the earth.
- <sup>10</sup> In righteousness shall he judge the world and the peoples with equity.

#### The Second Reading | 1 John 5:1-6

Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God, and everyone who loves the parent loves the child. By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and obey his commandments. For the love of God is this, that we obey his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome, for whatever is born of God conquers the world. And this is the victory that conquers the world, our faith. Who is it that conquers the world but the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God? This is the one who came by water and blood, Jesus Christ, not with the water only but with the water and the blood. And the Spirit is the one that testifies, for the Spirit is the truth.

#### The Gospel | John 15:9-17

Jesus said to his disciples, “As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commandments and abide in his love. I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete. “This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.

You are my friends if you do what I command you. I do not call you servants any longer, because the servant does not know what the master is doing; but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father. You did not choose me but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask him in my name. I am giving you these commands so that you may love one another.”

**Discuss:**

1. **The Collect:** God prepares for us such things that “surpass our understanding.” What is one time God surprised you? Were you open to God’s surprise, or did it catch you off guard? What promises does God make us? Do you have a hard time trusting those promises? God is faithful to us—how can we maintain our faithfulness to God?
2. **The First Reading:** It’s an incredible moment—the Gentiles now understand Peter, who speaks in tongues. This moment follows a similar event for Jews earlier in the book of Acts (the day of Pentecost, Acts 2). All who believe received the Holy Spirit in this moment are baptized with water. Willie Jennings, theologian at Yale Divinity School, says this: “The greatest event of this story comes after the miracle of baptism. It is the beginning of life together (‘Then they invited him to stay on for several days,’ verse 48). The reading habits of the church tend to run past these slender words, but they capture divine design. This is what God wants, Jews with Gentiles, Gentiles wanting to be with Jews, and together they eat and live in peace.” Reflect on your relationship with Jewish people. Is there divine space in those relationships? What do you appreciate about their tradition? What can we learn from one another in relationship with each other?
3. **The Second Reading:** “Who is it that conquers the world but the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?” What does it mean to conquer the world? Here is one thought: to greet every person and situation with grace and compassion, in the name of Jesus. The world is ours when we operate in the love of Jesus Christ. What’s one way you can “conquer the world” today?
4. **The Gospel:** Jesus says we must keep God’s commandments to abide in God’s love. What are the commandments we are to keep? Are some more important than others? Jesus says there is no greater love than to lay down one’s life for one’s friends. How does Jesus do this? How are we to do this in our lives?