

MARCH 21, 2021
FIFTH SUNDAY
IN LENT



A time for new beginnings.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

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

Sunday	John 12:20-33	The hour has come
Monday	Jeremiah 31:31-34	A new covenant from God
Tuesday	Hebrews 5:5-10	Jesus as high priest
Wednesday	2 Corinthians 3:5-18	Ministers of the new covenant
Thursday	Nehemiah 1:5-11	Nehemiah prays for his people
Friday	Hebrews 8:6-13	A better covenant
Saturday	Psalms 51:1-12	A prayer for cleansing
Sunday	Mark 14:1–15:47	The passion of Jesus

SCRIPTURE VERSE FOR THIS WEEK

But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put my law within them and I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

Jeremiah 31:33 (NRSV)

PRAYERS AND BLESSING

A Prayer for the Week:

God of new beginnings, help us to face our shortcomings knowing that you promise to be our God and that we are your people through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Mealtime Prayer:

Dear God, with this food restore our bodies as your promise of love and care for us restores our hearts. Amen.

A Blessing to Give:

May God create in you a clean heart through Christ Jesus our Savior and Lord.



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HYMN OF THE WEEK

*My Hope Is Built on
Nothing Less*



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:

- Think or tell about a time you failed at something.
- Failure is a part of life, but when we learn from our mistakes, it is not a total failure, but a learning moment. When have you learned from your mistakes?
- The Bible is filled with mistakes by God's people, yet God refuses to give up on us. What does that say about the God who reaches out to us through Jesus?

DEVOTIONS

Read: Jeremiah 31:31-34.

Jeremiah is speaking to a people who are either in exile in Babylon or about to be conquered and sent to Babylon. The northern kingdom of Israel had already fallen to the Assyrians well over a hundred years before. Now the southern kingdom of Judah is doomed. The people have been unfaithful and God's promises to Abraham, Moses, and David seem to have come to naught. But Jeremiah prophesies, "Not so." God promises to find a new way, a new covenant. This passage is about God's people only because it is about the God who continues to claim them. God will not give up on the people God loves. It is the very nature and character of God not to give up on us. God finds a way by having a new covenant, a new start. What God ordains will happen: we shall be God's people and God will be our God. We are not there yet. We are people of the new covenant, but the prophesy has not happened completely. We still need to be taught, but the day is coming that God's promise will be fulfilled. How do you learn about faith in Christ?

Pray: **God of the new covenant, give us faith to trust in your promises and courage to walk in your ways through Jesus Christ, the one who came to set us free. Amen.**

SERVICE

Psalm 51 is a prayer for cleansing and pardon. Christian prison ministries reach out to inmates with the love and hope of Jesus Christ. There are many who care for the children and families of prisoners and lead Bible studies and prayer with the prisoners. Pray for those who work with inmates and their families this week.

RITUALS AND TRADITIONS

This is our fifth week suggesting the discipline of using the *Daily Bible Readings*. At the core of new beginnings for Christians is the work of God revealed from the cross and in the Bible. Begin each day's reading by reciting Psalm 51:10: "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me." Say the *Prayer for the Week* after each reading, add your own prayers, and end by saying: **Remember that you are God's, and to God you shall return.**



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