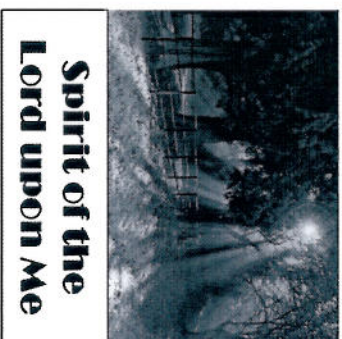


GOD'S STORY OUR STORY

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December 11, 2016



Devotion: Use this resource at home to guide your household's daily devotions. You can do this alone or with others; in the morning, during the day, or at night. Find a routine that works best for you.

Pray: Light a candle and open your devotion time with a prayer.

You love justice and hate wrongdoing, O Lord. Plant within us this same love for what is right, that we might live it and be a beacon of your heavenly light. Through Jesus our Lord, Amen.

Reflect: Reflect on the key verses from Sunday's reading.

I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my whole being shall exult in my God; for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation, he has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels. For as the earth brings forth its shoots, and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up, so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring up before all the nations. Isaiah 61:10-11

Study: Study the reading and consider the background.

Isaiah's words are music to an exiled Israel's ears. Could it be that deliverance was just around the corner? Time to put away weeping, people of God—if you only knew what goodness is coming your way!

Consider: Consider this theme for the week's text.

In many ways, we are living a world where God's promises have already come to pass.

Read: Read the following daily readings to deepen your understanding of Sunday's text. After the reading, ask the follow-up questions.

Sunday: *Spirit of the Lord upon Me*, Isaiah 61:1-11

Monday: *God Is Gracious*, Isaiah 63:7-14

Tuesday: *Prayer of Repentance*, Isaiah 63:15-64:12

Wednesday: *New Creation*, Isaiah 65:17-25

Thursday: *Edom's Betrayal and Israel's Restoration*, Obadiah 1:1-21

Friday: *Jerusalem's Victory*, Zechariah 12:1-13:1

Saturday: *The Coming Messenger*, Malachi 3:1-7

In what ways has creation been made new already?

Connect: Connect in conversation with others in your household. Discuss the following questions, or simply check in with "Highs" and "Lows."

What was a high point of your day? What was a low point?

Is yours a God of freedom or of bondage? How does the distinction shape your worship, prayer, work, relationships, desires and ambitions? How will you speak of God to those who do not yet know God?

What binds you? What prevents you from being all that God has created you to be? What can you do this week to accept God's freedom from the burden of your bondage? Who will you be, and what will you accomplish, knowing that in God you are free to live into the fullness of who God has created you to be and do?

Do: By acting on what we learn we make God's word come alive. Do the following activity this week.

Stick a wad of dollar bills (you decide how big) in your wallet, pocket, or purse. Every time you pass a Salvation Army kettle, put in a dollar. As you do, remember God's spirit lives in you. Every positive act you do for the world helps make it the new creation God desires.

Bless: Close your devotion with a blessing.

May God bless you abundantly with God's Holy Spirit. Amen.