

-- 40 DAY LENTEN DEVOTIONAL --

GOD IS...ALL AROUND US



Inspired by

"IMAGES OF GOD"

INTRODUCTION

This Lenten Devotional was inspired and based on the children's book, "Images of God for Young Children" by Marie-Helene Delval and illustrated by Barbara Nascimbeni. The book is described as: "It is impossible to know what God looks like. But the Bible describes many other ways that God is revealed to us. God is joy and wisdom. God is light, and bread, and breath. We have seen God's face in Jesus Christ. This book uses simple language to help young children discover these images of God in their world."

Though the book is written for young children, I read it and realized how good of a reminder these images are for all ages, especially during Lent, a time focused on our relationship with God. A great way to connect with God is to start seeing God more in all that is around us. It is an important reminder that God is not an old man sitting in the clouds, but is part of all creation and works in and among us to bring about good and righteousness in the world.

~Pastor Kelsey

THE DEVOTIONAL

The Devotional goes through the 40 days of Lent. You may not know that the 40 day count between Ash Wednesday and Easter does not include Sundays, as those are thought of as "mini-Easters" focused on the upcoming joy of the resurrection instead of the somber reverence taken on through the rest of Lent. This Devotional follows that tradition and gives a daily devotional for Monday through Saturday.

Each day includes the text and paired illustration for each of the 40 images of God shared in the book, a Psalm that connects to the theme, a short reflection written by Pastor Kelsey, and a prayer from the #PictureLent series that is based on the Psalms this year. You can learn more about that Lent series at pictureadvent.weebly.com.

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DAY 1: GOD IS BREATH

ASH WEDNESDAY

FEB. 17



PSALM 33:6-9

6 By the word of the Lord the heavens were made,

and all their host by the breath of his mouth.

7 He gathered the waters of the sea as in a bottle;

he put the deeps in storehouses.

8 Let all the earth fear the Lord;

let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him.

9 For he spoke, and it came to be;

he commanded, and it stood firm.

God is the strong wind
that shapes the earth and sea
and makes the stars shine
to the farthest edge of the heavens.
God is the breath of all living
creatures,
the breeze that stirs their hearts,
that refreshes their souls
and renews their spirits.

REFLECTION:

In Genesis 2, a telling of the creation of Humans, it is said that God “blew life’s breath into his nostrils.” From the beginning of our faith, God’s people have believed breath is the sign of God’s life giving spirit in all living creatures. Every breath we take can be a reminder of God’s love and grace in our lives. God’s breath does not only give us literal life, but also spiritual and emotional life too. God is breathing life when pieces of good come out of a bad situation. God is breathing life when someone moves a step closer toward living as Jesus teaches. God is breathing life when someone follows God’s call on their life. God breaths new life into the world all the time, we only have to look for it.

PRAYER:

Lord, please use our faith in you to strengthen our spirit. Encourage us through prayer, to lean into our faith so we know your love. Help light our paths in the darkness that might surround us and lead us down a path of love. Amen.¹

¹ Written by Stephanie Katauskas

DAY 2: GOD IS LIGHT

FEB. 18



God is light so dazzling
that our eyes cannot look at it.
But the beauty of each day,
the rays of the sun,
the kindness and the joy that light
up a face,
the hope and the happiness
that brighten our days--
all these reflect a little of God's
light.

PSALM 27:1

1 The Lord is my light and my salvation;
whom shall I fear?
The Lord is the stronghold of my life;
of whom shall I be afraid?

PSALM 43:3-4

3 Send your light and truth—those will guide
me!

Let them bring me to your holy mountain,
to your dwelling place.

4 Let me come to God's altar—
let me come to God, my joy, my delight—
then I will give you thanks with the lyre,
God, my God!

REFLECTION:

God is the light in the world. God's light shines through when hope is found in dark situations, when true truth is found, when God's path becomes clear, whenever there is joy or laughter. God's light became flesh in Jesus, the incarnation of hope, truth, and God's Word. Jesus brought us the light of salvation. In the dark moments of our lives, we can come to God who will help us bring rays of light.

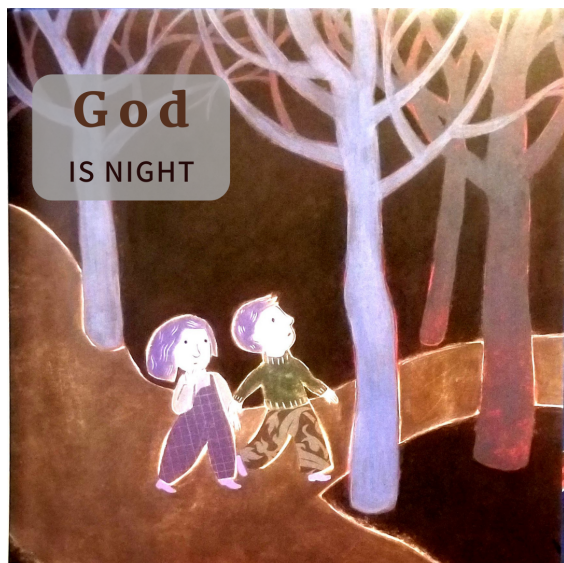
PRAYER:

Dear Heavenly God - Thank you for shining your light in the world. Help me to see your light. Help me to be your light. Amen.²

² Written by Rachel Goeres

DAY 3: GOD IS NIGHT

FEB. 19



PSALM 139:7-12

7 Where could I go to get away from your spirit?

Where could I go to escape your presence?

8 If I went up to heaven, you would be there.

If I went down to the grave, you would be there too!

9 If I could fly on the wings of dawn,

stopping to rest only on the far side of the ocean—

10 even there your hand would guide me;

even there your strong hand would hold me tight!

11 If I said, "The darkness will definitely hide me;

the light will become night around me,"

12 even then the darkness isn't too dark for you!

Nighttime would shine bright as day,
because darkness is the same as light to you!

Night can be scary sometimes,
because you can't see anything,
and because you can lose your
way.

Night requires you to be patient
and to wait, believing
that the day will always come
again.

REFLECTION:

We talk about God as light much more often. Those metaphors are valid and effective, but have the side effect of implying that the opposite of God is darkness, that darkness is evil. This Psalm reminds us that God is in darkness too. God can be found in the times where we don't know where the light is, in times of storm and night. God is in times of waiting and rest. God is the mystery of darkness.

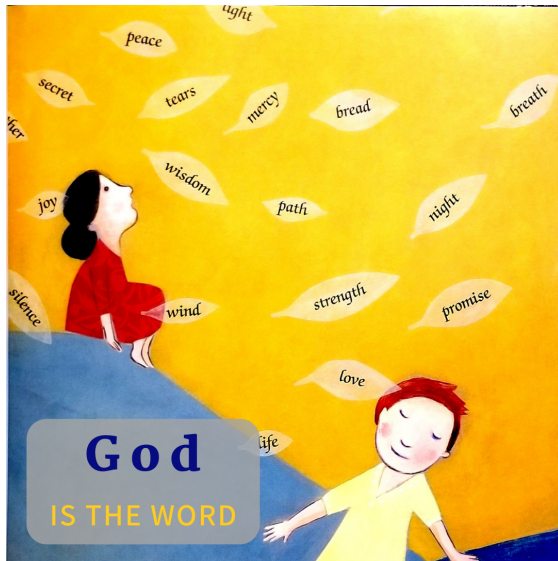
PRAYER:

Loving God, Thank you for being with me in dark places. Thank you for being with me in times of joy. Help me listen for your guidance so that I can be a helper for others. Amen.³

³ Written by Kimbra Burnett

DAY 4: GOD IS THE WORD

FEB. 20



Because God speaks to us,
we can hear the words of love
that he whispers
even in the silence.

Because God speaks,
we are able to speak with him.

PSALM 119:105-112

105 Your word is a lamp to my feet
and a light to my path.
106 I have sworn an oath and confirmed it,
to observe your righteous ordinances.
107 I am severely afflicted;
give me life, O Lord, according to your
word.
108 Accept my offerings of praise, O Lord,
and teach me your ordinances.
109 I hold my life in my hand continually,
but I do not forget your law.
110 The wicked have laid a snare for me,
but I do not stray from your precepts.
111 Your decrees are my heritage forever;
they are the joy of my heart.
112 I incline my heart to perform your
statutes
forever, to the end.

REFLECTION:

God's word is a lot of things to us. God's word is often the title given to the laws in the Bible or for the whole Bible itself. John 1 describes Jesus as God's word, the one who came to share teachings on how to have faith and live as God wants. God's word is not just in the past in ancient texts or when Jesus was on earth 2000 years ago, God's word is still active today as God speaks to us, nudging us toward our path, calling us to what we are meant to do.

PRAYER:

Thank you, God, for the ability to connect with you through prayer. Thank you, God, for different ways to pray. Thank you, God, for listening to our prayers and for hearing our cries. Let us be better at listening to each other and slow to speaking hurtful words. En el nombre de Jesús (In the Name of Jesus), we pray, Amen.⁴

⁴ Written by Sonya Luna