

-- 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.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. God is breath
2. God is light
3. God is night
4. God is the word
5. God is silence
6. God is secret
7. God is our tears
8. God is joy
9. God is a spring
10. God is a rock
11. God is a stream
12. God is the root
13. God is wind
14. God is a path
15. God is fire
16. God is a fortress
17. God is a promise
18. God is strength
19. God is wisdom
20. God is deliverance
21. God is covenant
22. God is a mystery
23. God is beauty
24. God is justice
25. God is holiness
26. God is peace
27. God is mercy
28. God is love
29. God is a shepherd
30. God is a king
31. God is a healer
32. God is a friend
33. God is a savior
34. God is majesty
35. God is smallness
36. God has a face
37. God is a parent
38. God is bread
39. God is life
40. God is with us

DAY 11: GOD IS A STREAM

MAR. 1



Like a stream that tumbles
Joyously down the mountain,
Like the blood that flows in our
veins,
The flood of God's love
Satisfies our thirst
To love and to be loved.

PSALM 36:7-9

7 Your faithful love is priceless, God!
Humanity finds refuge in the shadow of your wings.
8 They feast on the bounty of your house;
you let them drink from your river of pure joy.
9 Within you is the spring of life.
In your light, we see light.

PSALM 46:4-7

4 There is a river whose streams gladden God's city,
the holiest dwelling of the Most High.
5 God is in that city. It will never crumble.
God will help it when morning dawns.
6 Nations roar; kingdoms crumble.
God utters his voice; the earth melts.
7 The Lord of heavenly forces is with us!
The God of Jacob is our place of safety.
Selah

REFLECTION:

Our God of love, loves like a stream, always moving in the world, bringing life to all it passes, leaving a lasting mark behind. God's love is a gift of life and transformation for all, the same love for all creation. God's love flows around us and through us like the blood in our veins. God as a stream of love in and around us inspires us to love our neighbors and helps us to be loved by our neighbors. God's life-giving love that comes to us like a stream will continue to be our safety and refuge as well as provide our needs, and bring us joy.

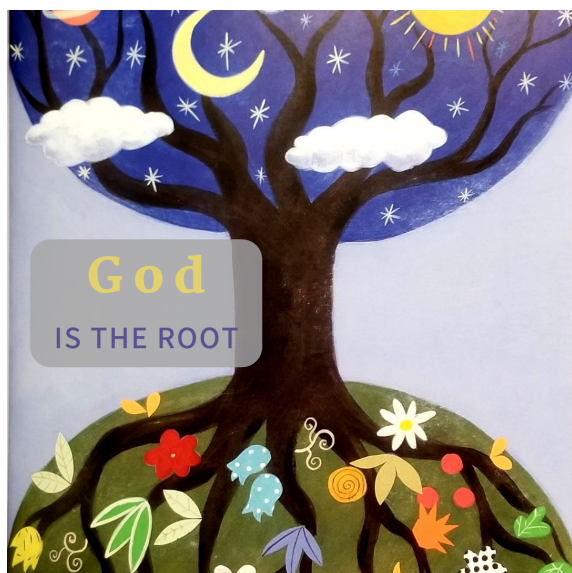
PRAYER:

Good God, you give us dazzling flowers, design food to be tasty, and provide soft clothing for our bodies. You provide all things with purpose and care. Thank you for reminding us that you are good, providing good gifts for all your children to experience and enjoy. Help us to trust in you and to seek first your kingdom and your righteousness. Amen.¹¹

¹¹ Written by Sarah Flannery

DAY 12: GOD IS THE ROOT

MAR. 2



PSALM 63:1-4

- 1 God! My God! It's you— I search for you!
My whole being thirsts for you!
My body desires you in a dry and tired land,
no water anywhere.
- 2 Yes, I've seen you in the sanctuary;
I've seen your power and glory.
- 3 My lips praise you
because your faithful love
is better than life itself!
- 4 So I will bless you as long as I'm alive;
I will lift up my hands in your name.

PSALM 62:5-7

- 5 Oh, I must find rest in God only,
because my hope comes from him!
- 6 Only God is my rock and my salvation—
my stronghold!—I will not be shaken.
- 7 My deliverance and glory depend on God.
God is my strong rock.
My refuge is in God.

In God, we hold the earth
And touch the heavens.
Through God, we draw in the sap
of life
So that our souls bloom
With unseen light.

REFLECTION:

God is the root, the beginning of all creation and the foundation that keeps it going. God is our stable foundation that roots us. When we invite God to be a part of our lives, God becomes the root of our lives, the root that we grow from to become as God wants us to be. God is our root that when we grow from that root, we become full of God's love, light, and life and can share that with the world. With God as our root we can grow big and reach far, growing many branches to bear fruit for God's Kingdom.

PRAYER:

Creator Lord - As we come to the end of a long winter - cold and gray with trees cracking in the frost - help us to see the signs of Spring as visions of hope. Each tiny redbud bloom, each green shoot of a tulip bulb, each chirp of a bird - may these signs remind us that through the death and cold of winter you have been working on new life. That within our hearts lie shoots of hope that burst forth with the promise of resurrection. Amen.¹²

¹² Written by Katie Swisher

DAY 13: GOD IS WIND

MAR. 3



PSALM 104:1-4

- Let my whole being bless the Lord!
Lord my God, how fantastic you are!
You are clothed in glory and grandeur!
- 2 You wear light like a robe;
you open the skies like a curtain.
- 3 You build your lofty house on the waters;
you make the clouds your chariot,
going around on the wings of the wind.
- 4 You make the winds your messengers;
you make fire and flame your ministers.

The wind is free; it blows where it wants.

So does the spirit of God.

The wind sweeps up seeds

That are waiting to sprout
wherever they fall,

All over the earth.

In the same way, God sows his
word

In the heart of each person.

REFLECTION:

The Spirit of God blows among us as the wind. Nudging us in new directions, whispering truth in our ears and planting seeds in our hearts. God's wind can blow in new opportunities, new understandings, and new hope. God's wind can shake things up or bring a cool breeze of relief. God's wind can bring transformation over time, shaping and moving us to live out God's values. When the wind blows, we can breathe in that fresh air and remember that our God of love and life will keep moving in the world and in our hearts.

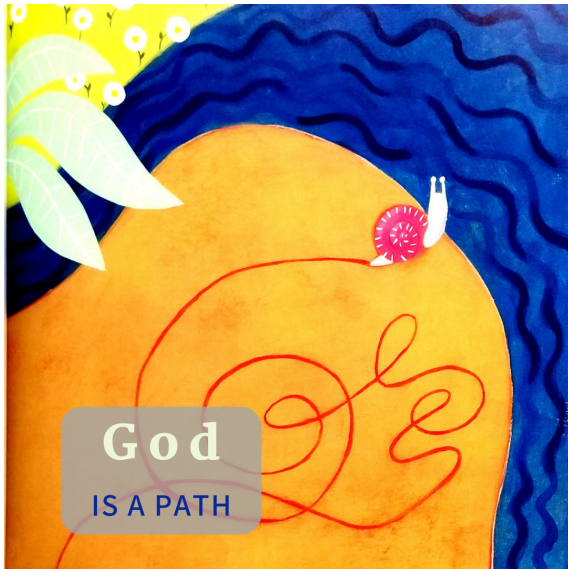
PRAYER:

God, in whom we can place our hope and trust, thank you for giving us the opportunity to take a peek into the minds and hearts of the psalmists who were people just like us. Even though they lived long ago, we find comfort in their words and their relationships with you. Help us to follow their examples. Amen.¹³

¹³ Written by Emily Delikat

DAY 14: GOD IS A PATH

MAR. 4



PSALM 25: 4-5, 8-12

- 4 Make me to know your ways, O Lord;
teach me your paths.
- 5 Lead me in your truth, and teach me,
for you are the God of my salvation;
for you I wait all day long.
- 8 Good and upright is the Lord;
therefore he instructs sinners in the way.
- 9 He leads the humble in what is right,
and teaches the humble his way.
- 10 All the paths of the Lord are steadfast love and
faithfulness,
for those who keep his covenant and his
decrees.
- 11 For your name's sake, O Lord,
pardon my guilt, for it is great.
- 12 Who are they that fear the Lord?
He will teach them the way that they should
choose.

When everything looks too difficult,
When we don't know where to go
anymore,
When it seems we stand before a
closed gate
Or on the bank of a river
That is impossible to cross,
We need to call on God to help us go
forward.
When we understand that his love
awaits us,
We won't be mistaken about the path.

REFLECTION:

God is a path, giving us guidance and promise of a future. As Jeremiah 29:11 says: "For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope." God's path for us may not always make sense in the moment, like the loopy path of the snail in the picture, but God will always guide us toward where is best for us to be. Those paths might not be easy, but God does not bring suffering to our paths, but continues to work what comes into our life journey for good. We can trust that when the way ahead seems foggy, God is our path ahead.

PRAYER:

God of creation, you send us on all different paths. Walk those paths with us. Give us courage to bring you glory when we are on those difficult paths. We are active in our waiting on you, Lord. Amen.¹⁴

¹⁴ Written by Kathryn Sappington

DAY 15: GOD IS FIRE

MAR. 5



PSALM 50:1-6

- 1 From the rising of the sun to where it sets,
God, the Lord God, speaks,
calling out to the earth.
- 2 From Zion, perfect in beauty,
God shines brightly.
- 3 Our God is coming;
he won't keep quiet.
A devouring fire is before him;
a storm rages all around him.
- 4 God calls out to the skies above
and to the earth in order to judge his
people:
- 5 "Bring my faithful to me,
those who made a covenant with me by
sacrifice."
- 6 The skies proclaim his righteousness
because God himself is the judge. Selah

When we open up our hearts
And our lives to God,
We receive a fire that gives light and
warmth,
But also a fire that burns.
And that can be a little scary.
But God's fire doesn't destroy
anything
Except what is bad, failed, broken,
rotten.
It is a good fire, with a flame that
purifies us.

REFLECTION:

Fire can simply bring warmth and light, but it can also be used as a tool to purify, forge metals, blow glass, cook food. Fire brings a lot of good but is also powerful and something to be careful with how we treat it. Similarly, God brings love and joy, but is also a powerful force that purifies us and transforms us to live more righteously. God's transforming power gives us hope that justice will come, that reformation is possible, and that light will shine again.

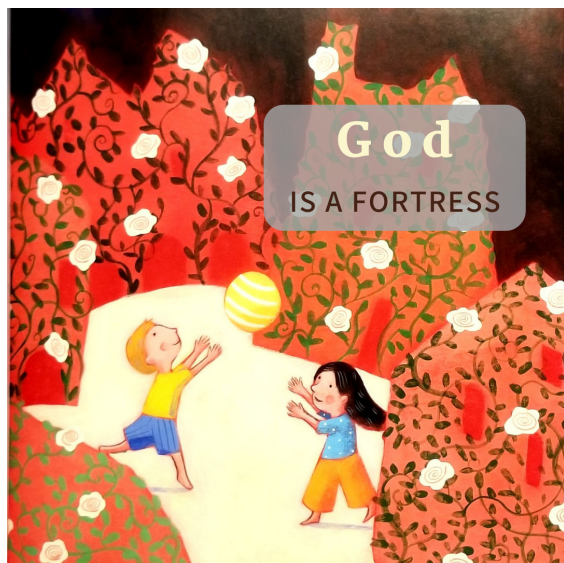
PRAYER:

God of awe and wonder,
Help us to put our trust in you. As we journey
through this time of Lent, allow us to be filled with
your mercy and grace. We pray that as we trust in
you, our lives are transformed for your glory.
Amen.¹⁵

¹⁵ Written by Grace Okerson

DAY 16: GOD IS A FORTRESS

MAR. 6



PSALM 91:1-6

1 You who live in the shelter of the Most High, who abide in the shadow of the Almighty,
2 will say to the Lord, "My refuge and my fortress; my God, in whom I trust."
3 For he will deliver you from the snare of the fowler and from the deadly pestilence;
4 he will cover you with his pinions, and under his wings you will find refuge; his faithfulness is a shield and buckler.
5 You will not fear the terror of the night, or the arrow that flies by day,
6 or the pestilence that stalks in darkness, or the destruction that wastes at noonday.

Everyone who takes shelter in God
Is able to resist attacks
From those who do wrong and
bring fear.
God protects them day after day
Behind the fortress of his love.

REFLECTION:

♪ ♪ "A mighty fortress is our God" ♪ ♪
is a favorite hymn what comes to mind when I think of God as our fortress. A fortress is usually talked about in war situations, but describing God as our fortress is less about God as a military force but describing God as strong and firm, a place of security and refuge for the vulnerable. When we are feeling attacked or overwhelmed, we can come to God to feel safe in knowing that God will be with us and keep us strong until we get to the other side. When things feel chaotic and scary we can reach out to God in prayer to find refuge in God's presence.

PRAYER:

Thank you God for protecting me and helping me stand tall against my fears. Let your light shine as I continue to live in your house. I will sing your praises forever! Amen.¹⁶

¹⁶ Written by Rev. Mary Hagley and Ethan Hagley