

-- 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 23: GOD IS BEAUTY

MAR. 15



PSALM 27:4-6

- 4 I have asked one thing from the Lord—
it's all I seek:
to live in the Lord's house all the days of my
life,
seeing the Lord's beauty
and constantly adoring his temple.
- 5 Because he will shelter me in his own dwelling
during troubling times;
he will hide me in a secret place in his own tent;
he will set me up high, safe on a rock.
- 6 Now my head is higher than the enemies
surrounding me,
and I will offer sacrifices in God's tent—
sacrifices with shouts of joy!
I will sing and praise the Lord.

The mountain peaks
and the great depths of the sea,
the light of day and the shadows of
night,
the marvelous birds and the fabulous
fish,
the multitude of trees, of plants, and of
animals -- all these splendors are just a
tiny reflection
of the perfect beauty of God.
But perhaps what reflects God's Beauty
the best is the expression of people
who love,
who hope, and who work to make life
beautiful.

REFLECTION:

God is beauty. God's beauty is all around us, in all of creation, but also as the book says in all love, hope, and life. God's beauty is not just in the aesthetic or superficial, but in the beautiful way that creation works in sync and finds restoration and new life no matter what comes. That beauty all comes from God. God's beauty is shared with us as we find shelter and joy in hard times, as we enjoy the beauty of every sunset, and as we transform more and more to the people God created us to be.

PRAYER:

Holy God, we give you thanks for the earth's abundance which nourishes our bodies and your abundant love that strengthens our hearts. Help us to respond to your gifts with gratitude so that others might also experience your love and grace. Amen.²³

²³ Written by Christine V. Hides

DAY 24: GOD IS JUSTICE

MAR. 16



PSALM 9:9-14

9 The Lord is a stronghold for the oppressed,
a stronghold in times of trouble.
10 And those who know your name put their
trust in you,
for you, O Lord, have not forsaken those who
seek you.
11 Sing praises to the Lord, who dwells in Zion.
Declare his deeds among the peoples.
12 For he who avenges blood is mindful of
them;
he does not forget the cry of the afflicted.
13 Be gracious to me, O Lord.
See what I suffer from those who hate me;
you are the one who lifts me up from the
gates of death,
14 so that I may recount all your praises,
and, in the gates of daughter Zion,
rejoice in your deliverance.

Before judging others, we should
see, know,
and understand who they are,
and why they did or did not do
something.

We should “walk a mile in their
shoes,”
as the proverb says.

God sees, knows, and understands --
much better than we do -- exactly
who we are,
and why we act the way we do.
God walks in our shoes everyday.

REFLECTION:

God is justice, not just a bringer of Justice or the judge. God IS justice. God can be Justice because God knows all, all that happens and all to know about each of us. God sees the sin and wrong that happens among us, but also knows and understands how we get to the point to do wrong. God's justice is not punitive or based on getting revenge but is restorative and is all about finding liberation for the oppressed and bringing everyone to a life of love and healthy holy living. God's justice brings everyone up to live the life God wants for all, a life that brings hope and a future.

PRAYER:

Heavenly Sustainer, turn our eyes upon you.
Show us which path you want us to take today.
Amen.²⁴

²⁴ Written by Lauren Norton

DAY 25: GOD IS HOLINESS

MAR. 17



God is perfect beauty,
perfect goodness,
all love, all joy, all peace.
God wants us to have this holiness
too.

PSALM 51:1-3, 7-10

1 Have mercy on me, God, according to your faithful love!

Wipe away my wrongdoings according to your great compassion!

2 Wash me completely clean of my guilt;
purify me from my sin!

3 Because I know my wrongdoings,
my sin is always right in front of me.

7 Purify me with hyssop and I will be clean;
wash me and I will be whiter than snow.

8 Let me hear joy and celebration again;
let the bones you crushed rejoice once more.

9 Hide your face from my sins;
wipe away all my guilty deeds!

10 Create a clean heart for me, God;
put a new, faithful spirit deep inside me!

REFLECTION:

Holiness is not just about living the life of a nun or monk. God is the epitome of holiness as the culmination of joy, love, mercy, and peace. God shares God's holiness with all of us, both in God's interactions with us and in how we are transformed to be more holy with God's help. With the help of the Holy Spirit we are brought closer and closer to living out perfect love, joy, and peace. That is what holiness is all about. It doesn't have to look one specific way, but is about living out God's love, joy, and peace to the best of our ability.

PRAYER:

Thank you, God, for your love. Thank you for your grace that forgives and makes my heart clean. Amen.²⁵

²⁵ Written by Rev. Melissa Collier Gepford

DAY 26: GOD IS PEACE

MAR. 18



PSALM 72:1-5

God, give your judgments to the king.

Give your righteousness to the king's son.

2 Let him judge your people with righteousness

and your poor ones with justice.

3 Let the mountains bring peace to the people;

let the hills bring righteousness.

4 Let the king bring justice to people who are poor;

let him save the children of those who are needy,

but let him crush oppressors!

5 Let the king live as long as the sun,
as long as the moon,
generation to generation.

There are so many people
and so many countries at war!
And some even say
that they fight in the name of God.
God looks all over the Earth
for places where his peace can exist.
Let's help him find these places!

REFLECTION:

God is peace in more ways than one. God brings peace among people and to the places that are tense or wartorn. God is found in the work to bring violence and harm to a stop. God's peace is also found within us, when we are in turmoil or strife, we can seek God in our prayer and how we live, and find solace and grounding in God's peace. Even when we aren't in the most turmoil or strife, we can seek God to find peace, both in a moment of serenity and in the way we experience life. We can also take part in God's peace by being people and creating spaces of peace for others.

PRAYER:

O Mighty God, we thank you for being our strength and our hope. Help us to not lose sight of your power when things around us seem big and hard. We call out to you, hear our prayers. Make known to us your everlasting peace and surround us with beacons of your might.
Amen.²⁶

²⁶ Written by Diane, Jonathan, and Wesley Kofahl

DAY 27: GOD IS MERCY

MAR. 19



PSALM 57:1-3

- 1 Have mercy on me, God;
have mercy on me
because I have taken refuge in you.
I take refuge
in the shadow of your wings
until destruction passes by.
- 2 I call out to God Most High—
to God, who comes through for me.
- 3 He sends orders from heaven and saves me,
rebukes the one who tramples me. *Selah*
God sends his loyal love and faithfulness.

God comforts us when we are not
proud
of what we've done.
God always looks at us
with eyes full of mercy,
because he loves in us
what we wish to be.
Under that look of mercy,
we become better.

REFLECTION:

God is mercy. Just as God is justice, God is equally God of mercy. These are not opposing parts of God, but traits of God that compliment each other and work alongside each other. No matter what others around us bring, we can always trust that God will give us mercy. God's mercy and grace is not just a one time offer or limited to small mistakes. No matter what we do or how far we stray from God, God will always welcome us back to having faith and growing to be better. Restoration, Resurrection, Transformation, Reconciliation are always possible when we allow God to help us.

PRAYER:

Merciful God, here we are asking for mercy. Whether we are on a mountain top or in a pit, may our lives proclaim your faithfulness. Be our helper. Be our strength. Amen.²⁷

²⁷ Written by Rev. Kallie Green

DAY 28: GOD IS LOVE

MAR. 20



PSALM 48:9-14

- 9 We dwell on your faithful love, God,
in your temple.
- 10 Your praise, God, just like your reputation,
extends to the far corners of the earth.
Your strong hand is filled with
righteousness.
- 11 Let Mount Zion be glad;
let the towns of Judah rejoice
because of your acts of justice!
- 12 Walk around Zion;
go all the way around it;
count its towers.
- 13 Examine its defenses closely;
tour its fortifications
so that you may tell future generations:
- 14 "This is God,
our God, forever and always!
He is the one who will lead us
even to the very end."

God is love, and love is
patient and considerate.
It is not jealous; it is not proud.
Love is not angry; it forgives
everything.
Love lasts forever.

REFLECTION:

God is love. This is one of the images of God that you probably hear about the most. Take a second to really let God as love become real and not just a saying. Yes, love means all of those things that Paul lists in 1 Corinthians 13, but God's love is beyond all that. God is love because God loves constantly and equally for all Children of God. It is God's love that enforces God's mercy and justice, God's promises and deliverance, and God's joy and light. We never have to worry that we will lose God's love for us. There is nothing we must do to earn God's love. Our part is to accept God's love into our life and let it transform us to share God's love and live it out.

PRAYER:

Dear God who knows us and loves us,
Thank you for teaching us to love big just like
you love us. We pray that we can show others
the same love so they can know how good You
are. Help us to choose the path that leads to
You. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.²⁸

²⁸ Written by Rev. Emma Williams