

**Faith Bible Study Guide**  
**For the Week of 9-1-2024 - Fifteenth SUNDAY IN PENTECOST:**  
**Sermon Title: "If Ever I Loved Thee, My Jesus Tis Now"**



**Be still [2 Minutes]:** As you hear these Centering Words, let us greet each other, greet the Holy Spirit, and begin with 1 minute of silence, breathing in the breath of God and allow the group to open themselves to the Holy Spirit today:

**CENTERING WORDS:** My heart longs to be close to you, O God. May my life and my deeds honor you.

**OPENING PRAYER:** Creator of the heavenly lights, there is no shadow in your divine light. It remains unchanging across the eons, even as the stars come and go. You are our faithful creator, the Gardener of our lives. You plant your truth within us and inspire lives of caring and love. We honor and worship you. Amen.

**Be the Word**

**Scripture Lesson:** John 21:15-23

<sup>15</sup>When they finished eating, Jesus asked Simon Peter, "Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?"

Simon replied, "Yes, Lord, you know I love you."

Jesus said to him, "Feed my lambs." <sup>16</sup>Jesus asked a second time, "Simon son of John, do you love me?"

Simon replied, "Yes, Lord, you know I love you."

Jesus said to him, "Take care of my sheep." <sup>17</sup>He asked a third time, "Simon son of John, do you love me?"

Peter was sad that Jesus asked him a third time, "Do you love me?" He replied, "Lord, you know everything; you know I love you."

Jesus said to him, "Feed my sheep." <sup>18</sup>I assure you that when you were younger you tied your own belt and walked around wherever you wanted. When you grow old, you will stretch out your hands and

another will tie your belt and lead you where you don't want to go." <sup>19</sup> He said this to show the kind of death by which Peter would glorify God. After saying this, Jesus said to Peter, "Follow me."

L: The Word of God for all people

P: Thanks be to God

### **Be present: [Being mindful of others and sharing time]**

1. Take a deep breath. *How is it with your soul?*
2. What were your main takeaways from Sunday's service? (If you were not in worship on Sunday, what are you CURIOUS about?)
3. When you've outgrown things in life, do you ever find yourself reflecting back at what you've outgrown?

### **Be rooted: [Bible Study]**

1. What does spiritual maturity mean to you? Do you feel you are growing in your relationship with Jesus?
2. Rev. Ken Suhr preached the following two types of spirituality:
  - a. **Active Spirituality:** Our actions to grow in faith, such as prayer, study, and service.
  - b. **Passive Spirituality:** How we respond to life's challenges and how God works in us through those situations.
  - c. How does both active and passive spirituality are essential to spiritual maturity? Consider how these have played a role in your life.
3. **Exploring Active Spirituality:**
  - a. What do you think is the significance of Jesus asking Peter three times, "Do you love me?"
  - b. How does this relate to Peter's previous denial of Jesus? How is Jesus restoring Peter?
  - c. What are some "Active Spirituality" practices you engage in to grow closer to Jesus? (e.g., prayer, worship, Bible study)
  - d. How do these practices help you in your daily life?
4. **Understanding Passive Spirituality:**
  - a. Passive Spirituality involves surrendering to God's will, especially in difficult or uncontrollable circumstances.
  - b. Discuss Theologian Henri Nouwen's quote: "*Spiritual maturity is the willingness and ability to be led where you would rather not go.*"
  - c. Share a time when you had to trust God in a difficult situation. How did this experience shape your faith?
  - d. How can we move from "believing in God for certain things" to "believing in God" regardless of our circumstances?
5. What does it mean to "be with Jesus in your pain"? How can this shape our spiritual maturity?

### **Be transformed: [Call to action]**

1. Consider the areas in your life where you might need to embrace Passive Spirituality.
2. Think of an area of your life where you need to practice Passive Spirituality. Share it with the group (if comfortable) and discuss how you might approach it with faith.

3. How can accepting our circumstances lead to a more profound love for God and others?

Prayers & Concerns

**For Healing and Wholeness:**

- Christine Keim (vision issues)
- Oscar Philip Bland, Jr. (cousin of Dr. Lynn Atkins, missing for 4 months)

**Absent from the Body, Present with the Lord:**

- Rachel Kam (Auntie Kanani's partner) - [Celebration of Life details to be shared at a later date; September 14 at 3pm]
- James Tio Ichikawa- (Ralph Ichikawa's brother) - [Celebration of Life, November 2, 2024]

**Let us continue to Pray for our Beloved Community and World:**

- Excessive Heat Warnings
- The residents of the slide area of Rancho Palos Verdes
- People of the Holy Land and Ukraine and in all place where there is war and destruction
- Families rebuilding after natural disasters and man-made/created disasters
  - For the people, wildlife, and firefighters battling forest fires
- For our country during such a tense election year and for the leadership of our country and our churches

**And Know that He is God:** (a line from the Sunday's Closing hymn "My Jesus, I Love Thee")

*I'll love Thee in life and I will love Thee in death  
And praise Thee as long as Thou lendest me breath  
And say when the death dew lies cold on my brow  
If ever I loved Thee, my Jesus 'tis now*