

Faith Bible Study Guide
For the Week of September 21, 2025
Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost
“The Prayer That Changes YOU More Than THEM”



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: (Box Breathing: Take a deep breath for 4 seconds, hold it for 4 seconds, exhale for 4 seconds, hold for 4 seconds) Today we're exploring prayer — not just as a way to ask God for what we want, but as a way God changes us and moves us toward justice, compassion, and peace.

OPENING PRAYER:

L: Search for the Lord each day.

P: God waits where we least expect it.

L: Search for the balm in Gilead.

P: God brings healers in our need.

L: Cry out to the Lord in times of distress.

P: God comes speedily to meet us.

L: Come! Worship the One who hears our pleas.

Great Healer, be our balm of Gilead, for we ache to be made whole. Come to us in times of trial and heal our sin-sick souls. Amid those who prey on your little ones, help us live faithfully as children of light, May we be found faithful in a little, that you may entrust us with much. Amen.

Be the Word: Scripture Lesson: Amos 8:4-7, Psalm 113:1-2,4-8, 1 Timothy 2:1-8

Amos 8:4-7

Hear this, you who trample on the needy and destroy
the poor of the land, **5** saying,

“When will the new moon
be over so that we may sell grain,
and the Sabbath
so that we may offer wheat for sale,
make the ephah smaller, enlarge the shekel,
and deceive with false balances,

- 6 in order to buy the needy for silver
and the helpless for sandals,
and sell garbage as grain?"
- 7 The LORD has sworn by the pride of Jacob:
Surely I will never forget what they have done

Psalm 113:1-2, 4-8

Praise the LORD!

You who serve the LORD—praise!

Praise the LORD's name!

2

Let the LORD's name be blessed

from now until forever from now!

The LORD is high over all the nations;

God's glory is higher than the skies!

5 Who could possibly compare to the LORD our God?

God rules from on high;

6 he has to come down to even see heaven and earth!

7 God lifts up the poor from the dirt

and raises up the needy from the garbage pile

8 to seat them with leaders—

with the leaders of his own people!

1 Timothy 2:1-8

First of all, then, I ask that requests, prayers, petitions, and thanksgiving be made for all people.

2 Pray for kings and everyone who is in authority so that we can live a quiet and peaceful life in complete godliness and dignity. 3 This is right and it pleases God our savior, 4 who wants all

people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth. 5 There is one God and one mediator between God and humanity, the human Christ Jesus, 6 who gave himself as a payment to set all people free. This was a testimony that was given at the right time. 7 I was appointed to be a preacher and apostle of this testimony—I'm telling the truth and I'm not lying! I'm a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth.

8 Therefore, I want men to pray everywhere by lifting up hands that are holy, without anger or argument.

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's something small or lighthearted you've prayed for this week?
3. What's something big or serious you've prayed for?"
(Ex: "a parking spot" vs. "healing for a loved one.")
4. How can we pray for you?

Be rooted: [Bible Study]

Let's go through each text again. What stands out to you? What questions do you have?

Exegesis & Commentary

Amos 8:4-7

- **Background:** Amos was a shepherd and dresser of sycamore figs, called from the margins

to confront Israel's leaders in a time of economic prosperity (8th century BCE). While the elites thrived, the poor were exploited. Festivals and Sabbaths — supposed to be days of rest and equity — were resented by merchants because they delayed profit-making.

- **The critique:** Amos names fraudulent practices: shrinking the ephah (cheating in measures), inflating the shekel (charging more), and selling garbage as grain. This isn't just "bad business" — it's sacrilege. Economic exploitation was (and is) a form of idolatry.
- **Progressive theological note:** God's memory is long: "Surely I will never forget what they have done" (v.7). Injustice is not forgotten by God — even if it's normalized by society.
- **Current resonance:** Think of payday loans, predatory landlords, food deserts, or wage theft. Just like in Amos's day, profits often come at the expense of the most vulnerable.

Note: Amos is speaking to wealthy elites profiting off of unjust business practices. He accuses them of cheating with weights and measures, exploiting the poor, and treating religion as an obstacle to profit.

Discussion Questions:

1. Where do you see "false balances" in our society today?
2. What does this passage suggest about the connection between faith and economics?

Psalm 113:1–2, 4–8

- **Background:** A hymn of praise likely sung at temple festivals, part of the "Egyptian Hallel" (Psalms 113–118), recited at Passover. It roots worship in both praise *and* God's lifting of the poor.
- **The imagery:** God "comes down" — unlike distant deities who stay aloof. The psalm insists that true divine glory is shown in God's attention to the poor, lifting them from the ash heap to seats of honor.
- **Progressive theological note:** Praise and justice are not separate activities. Worship without care for the marginalized is hollow. God's transcendence and immanence are held together: God is both "high above the nations" and yet close to the poor.
- **Current resonance:** We see glimpses of this in movements that amplify the voices of the marginalized — for instance, climate justice led by Indigenous communities, or disability activists demanding dignity.

Note: A psalm of praise used at festivals. It celebrates God's majesty *and* God's compassion — the One who is high above the nations, yet lifts the poor from the dust and seats them with leaders.

Discussion Questions:

3. How does this psalm redefine what it means for God to be "great"?
4. Where have you seen God "lift up the lowly" in today's world?

1 Timothy 2:1–8

- **Background:** The Pastoral Epistles (1 & 2 Timothy, Titus) were written in a time when Christians lived under suspicion in the Roman Empire. Encouragement to pray for "kings and all in authority" was partly about ensuring survival and witness in a hostile culture.
- **The challenge:** These prayers were not about endorsing emperors (many of whom

persecuted Christians) but about seeking a society where believers could live “peaceful lives in godliness and dignity.”

- **The radical claim:** God “wants all people to be saved” (v.4). In a hierarchical world, Paul affirms the radical equality of all before God, mediated through Christ.
- **Progressive theological note:** Praying for leaders is not passivity; it’s resistance against despair. We pray not for their domination, but for their transformation and restraint. It’s also a practice of guarding our own hearts against bitterness.
- **Current resonance:** In polarized politics, it’s difficult to pray for those whose policies harm. Yet prayer doesn’t mean approval — it’s about opening space for accountability, transformation, and imagining alternatives. Think of interfaith vigils after mass shootings, or prayers for peace in Gaza even while calling out unjust policies.

Note: The church is asked to pray for rulers and leaders — not to approve of them, but to seek peace and dignity for all. Prayer here is about resisting despair, asking God to transform leaders, and keeping our own hearts from bitterness.

Discussion Questions:

5. How do you honestly feel about praying for leaders you disagree with?
6. What’s the difference between praying for someone’s success vs. their transformation or restraint?
7. How might prayer shift *our* posture toward those in power?

Be transformed: [Faith in Action Challenge]:

Let’s think of a **current issue** (local or global) that is on your heart this week.

Write a short prayer for that situation, shaped by:

- **Amos:** seeking justice for the poor
- **Psalms 113:** God lifting the lowly
- **1 Timothy:** praying for leaders with transformation in mind



*We lift up prayers for all of God's
Creation. Lord Hear our Prayers.*

continued prayers for Healing and Wholeness

Alice Kajiya	Diane & Destiny Ueda-Banda	Jordan Sasaki	Nancy Matsushima
Alvena Fukuhara	Dr. DoAnn Tsuneo Kaneko	Joye Barker	Noah Miyagawa-Sue
Amy Higa	Dr. Nguyen	Juliet Koyanagi	Oscar Philip Bland, Jr.
Anthony Anderson, Sr.	Elaine Yoshida	Kaitlyn Sabedra	Pearl Iizuka
Apolosi Lokotui	Eleanor Ngai	Karlynn Fernandez	Priscilla Kandel
Arthur Kobashi	Emi Hino	Kay Saxton	Raquel M. Martinez
Audrey Goto	Ernie Santiago	Kian Tehrani	Richard Ueyuenten
Austin Maeda	Faith Tanaka	Kiki Hashimoto	Ruth Hirata
Barbara Tamura	Florence Nakakura	Kim Foster	Ruth Taira
Betty Kobata	Fred Oshiro	Rev. Kim	Sandra Minjarez- Grange
Bill Morris	Geri Shiraki	Montenegro	Scarlett Bone
Brian Okumura	Glenn and Millie Shimizu	Kelsey DeGracia	Steph Matsunaga
Cami Bruns	Grace Tochiara	Kyle Ichikawa	Sue Hamada
Carolyn Hyatt	Grant Hanada	Larry Takumi	Sue Hasegawa
Chic Miyake	Harriet Tateyama	Layne Nakasone	Susan Mizuki
Christine Keim	Haru Yasunaga	Linda Jung	Susan Slade
Claretta Foster	Hisako Shohara	Lori Conti	Tam Kobayashi
Dan Segawa	Ingrid Peterson	Lucas Yniguez	Tommy Sakaguchi
Danny Tokudomi	Irene Munesato	Marion Antoku	Tseyli Mantooth
Dan Yamashita	Jack Honda	Mary Jung	Victoria DelaTorre
Derek Troester	Jayne Watanabe	Mary Marchand	Walker Wilkerson
Deron Tokishi	Jehiel Vinluan	Mary Tamura	Wayne Shimizu
	Jerry Osaka	Maxine Butcher	Winnie Osaki
	Joanne Sato	Mutsuko Nishi	Theresa Apicella
			Kraig Nakano

for All Our Saints

Keith Tokuhara and family, on the passing of his wife, Mary Sutton Tokuhara. A Celebration of Life is scheduled for October 4, 2025 at 2:00pm. RSVP with Church Office.

The Hirayama family, on the passing of Ted Hirayama. A Celebration of Life will be held for Ted on Sunday, October 5, 2025 at 2pm. Private family service.

Carol Hashiro and family, on the passing of her husband, Mike Hashiro (7/25/25). A Celebration of Life is scheduled for September 20, 2025 at 2:00pm. RSVP with Church Office.

Brian Uchida and family, on the passing of Florence Uchida (7/29/25). A Celebration of Life is scheduled for November 1, 2025 at 10:00am. RSVP with Church Office.

The Hirano family, on the passing of Helen Hirano. (8/10/25)

Carol Tondo and family, on the passing of her mother, Yoko Murakami (7/14/25).

Amanda Taketa-Mark and family, on the passing of her grandmother, Llynda Taketa (7/21/25).

The Kawamura family, on the passing of Bess Kawamura.

The Kato family, on the passing of Tak Kato.

The Akiyama family, on the passing of Masako Akiyama.

those in Community Living & Homecare

Chic Miyake
Doris Kato
Emma Horiuchi
Faith Tanaka
Rev. Harry Fujimoto
Irene & Tak Ryono
Jane Kiyohara
Marion Antoku
Mary Jung
Nobie Shiokari
Ruth Hirata
Sets Asano
Sue Hasegawa

for our Worldwide Community

for the Leadership of our Country and our Churches

for the immigrants: migrants, refugees, asylees

for our siblings in Christ who struggle and in need of God's care

for those who live in through wars, unrest, and violence

for those suffering and rebuilding after national disasters and man-made catastrophes

UPDATED 9.10.2025

* Note change for Doris' Award, December 7, 2025

- Pearl Iizuka (9/11)
- Tam Kobayashi (9/9) / (10/21)
- Audrey Goto recovery
- Kraig Nakano
- Alice Kajiya
- Scarlett Bone
- Diane Ueda-Banda (to monitor health, but relieved for now)
- Students starting the new school year (and preparing to start the new year); UC's are finally starting up again, so IRELAND BONE & BROOKE SHIBATA are starting up at UCI this week! - Pray for their parents too!
- Tseyli Mantooth
- Kim Foster & Claretta Foster
- Debra (surgery) and Deborah (101 yo mother; fell) (Kim Foster's friends)
- Dan Yamashita
- Juno Uyematsu
- Walker Wilkerson

Birthdays:

Jason Sasaki (9/14)

Danny Hirata (9/18)

Celebrations:

Chad Uemura & Natsuko Takito (wed 9/4)

Brandon Chang

Andrew Tani



FAITH UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Marketplace

Saturday, September 27, 2025
9 AM – 2 PM



Featuring our first *ReHome Goods* Sale! Recycled | Repurposed | Regifted Goods

FAITH UNITED METHODIST CHURCH – 2115 WEST 182ND STREET, TORRANCE CA



WHEN WE NEED IT

Drop-offs will be accepted the week of September 22–26.



Monday – Friday
10 am – 2 pm and 6:30 am – 8 pm



PLEASE DO NOT DROP OFF ANYTHING BEFORE THIS WEEK,
OR ON EVENT DAY.

FAITH UNITED METHODIST CHURCH – 2115 WEST 182ND STREET, TORRANCE CA



 **WHAT WE NEED**

- * Collectibles: Sports cards, Pokeman cards, Beanie Babies, Hot Wheels, Bobble heads...
- * Authentic designer items: purses, accessories...
- * Asian dishes, dolls, kimonos
- * Vintage and Antique goods
- * Plants
- * Sports equipment, tools
- * Clean toys, puzzles, games
- * Pots, pans, kitchen utensils
- * Denim apparel, clothing "NWT"...

WHAT WE DON'T NEED 

- * NO Stuffed animals
- * NO Old clothes
- * NO Broken appliances
- * NO Large furniture
- * NO Books
- * NO Perfumes, lotions, soaps

 **WHAT WE REALLY NEED**

YOU to sign up for a workshift!

FAITH UNITED METHODIST CHURCH - 2115 WEST 182ND STREET, TORRANCE CA

And Know that He is God: Closing Prayer & Blessing

We've seen that prayer isn't about controlling God or asking for only what we want. Prayer is about aligning ourselves with God's justice, compassion, and peace — and allowing God to change us.

Closing Prayer (adapted from the sermon's litany):

Leader: When we pray for justice,

All: We resist the lie that injustice is inevitable.

Leader: When we pray for the poor,

All: We resist the lie that poverty is permanent.

Leader: When we pray for leaders,

All: We resist the lie that corruption will always win.

Leader: When we pray for peace,

All: We resist the lie that violence is the only way.

Leader: O God who hears our prayers, change the world by changing us.

All: Amen.