



Somedays'

Meditations

meditations for teens and tweens

August

2026

Sunday, August 2, 2026

And the scribes who came down from Jerusalem said, 'He has Beelzebul, and by the ruler of the demons he casts out demons.' And he called them to him, and spoke to them in parables, 'How can Satan cast out Satan? If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. And if a house is divided against itself, that house will not be able to stand.

Mark 3:22-25

Here, Jesus is responding to people who think that he is possessed by a demon (!). Jesus says that it would be pretty silly if he were casting out demons *as a demon*, because a house divided against itself cannot stand. This phrase, "a house divided against itself cannot stand," is commonly used in our culture, and it doesn't always have to do with demons!

A divided house isn't one that agrees all the time. If the "house" is our family, our mother can disagree with our father, or you can disagree with your sibling. That's normal. If the "house" is our country, then we can all hold different opinions. Actually, that makes us stronger. What Jesus is talking about isn't disagreements but *actively* working against each other. Any community will become broken if its people cannot work together.

Jesus was forming a community while he worked to heal and care for others. Even when he was on the cross, he was concerned with who would care for his mother. He taught others to live in love together all throughout his public ministry (and probably beforehand, too), because he knew that working together makes people stronger and more joyful. Even when we're frustrated with people in our communities, remember that they are also beloved children of God, just as you are.

Prayer

God, please bind us tightly together. Bring our family together in love and care, join our church one person to another so that we are strong and can work for the community, and make our nation both diverse and whole. All this we pray in honor of the greatest community: the Holy Trinity.

Wednesday, August 5th, 2026

The next day he saw Jesus coming towards him and declared, “Here is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!”

John 1:29

You may have heard this short statement often in our church services on Sunday mornings: Behold, the lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world! This is something the priest may say when raising up (or *elevating*) the consecrated bread and wine at the end of the Eucharistic Prayer.

You can also see a lamb in many stained-glass windows. He often has one of his legs wrapped around a staff as if he’s carrying it. He also often has a special halo around his head. It’s a halo that only Jesus gets: it has a red cross in it to signify Jesus’ sacrifice and his blood. Some of our earliest depictions of Jesus, from the 3rd, 4th, and 5th centuries, have Jesus associated with a sheep. For Christians, sheep almost always equals Jesus.

Why do you think that is? Part of it is because Jesus was born Jewish, and in his culture, an unspotted (or completely white) lamb was an important symbol of God’s love for the Jewish people. An unspotted lamb was often sacrificed near a holiday called Pasche, and when Jesus was talking about his own death around the Pasche, he identified himself with that lamb. Jesus is the one who takes away the sin from the world, which is why we don’t sacrifice lambs anymore.

Does that mean that sin is completely gone from this world? No, it doesn’t. We still do things that we shouldn’t do, and we feel guilty for them. God forgives us our sins, though, especially when we tell them to him and apologize. Sin doesn’t “stick” to us, in other words. God pulls it out like a thorn in our toe and washes our feet to heal the wound.

Prayer

Thank you God for your sacrifice. Please forgive me for doing things that I know aren’t right. Help me know what is good and what isn’t good. Please help everyone around the world know when they are hurting others, and help them come to you for forgiveness.

Sunday, August 9th, 2026

And leaving the crowd behind, they took him with them in the boat, just as he was. Other boats were with him. A great gale arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that the boat was already being swamped. But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion; and they woke him up and said to him, 'Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?' He woke up and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, 'Peace! Be still!' Then the wind ceased, and there was a dead calm. He said to them, 'Why are you afraid? Have you still no faith?' And they were filled with great awe and said to one another, 'Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?'

Mark 4:36-41

Isn't this a great story? It's so easy to picture: Jesus and everyone on the boat, the wind raging around them, Jesus waking up and commanding the storm with his arms wide open, then settling back in to continue his nap, all while the disciples whisper with their faces close, "Who IS this guy!?"

Jesus doesn't always work so dramatically, of course. Have you ever been scared of something, whether it was something big or something small, but something that got deep into your heart and made you feel so afraid, and then very suddenly felt better? Sometimes it's because we go to a safe place, or we're hugged by a safe person. My fear often goes away when I pet a cat or a dog. Or, maybe you've just said a prayer, and God has parted the storming sorrow in your heart. We call these "miracles," because God is working directly in our lives.

Miracles happen a lot more often than you might think. I once knew a very old man who was very close to death. I was asked to come to the hospital and to give him Last Rites, which are prayers for people who are close to death. The family prayed for him, I blessed him, and I asked God to receive the man into his heavenly kingdom. And didn't you know it, the next day the man was awake and talking, the day after that he was up and walking around, and the next week he was doing push-ups in the hospital lounge! He had been healed!

Did my prayers heal him? Did the presence of those he loved around him heal him? Was there some medical reason that he recovered? Probably all of the above, because *all healing* happens through Jesus and the Holy Spirit. Let us be thankful each and every day for God's presence in our lives.

Activity: Have you ever witnessed a miracle? Ask your parents if they have.

Wednesday, August 12th, 2026

For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them.

Matthew 18:20

After college, I spent two years teaching English in a Japanese middle school. It was a pretty wonderful experience, but I was also pretty lonely. I was the only person for miles who could speak my language. For everyone else, English was something foreign and different. It was something they learned in school, like math or science. They didn't go through the day thinking in it, and when they went to bed, they didn't pray in it. English was something "else."

In a way, I had expected that. I was in rural Japan, for crying out loud! So before I left, I geared myself up, grabbed my favorite books and music, and gave myself time to just sink into my language.

What I didn't expect, though, was that I wouldn't know any Christians for two years. I had a decent relationship with God. I prayed often. I talked with God, and I was sure that God was responding to me. But then, in Japan, I didn't see any churches (or anything that looked like churches). I visited shrines and temples as a tourist, but not for religious reasons. I took walks in the woods, where I often found God, but instead everything seemed foreign to me, just like English was foreign to the Japanese.

God was, of course, still with me. I met a Buddhist monk, and we often talked about religion. I found a way to pray in the mountains, and I thought a lot about how people find the being who I called God in different ways. I made due. But even still, it was a lonely time.

We can be Christians anywhere. God can talk to us anywhere. We're never truly alone. But having a fellow Christian with us who can talk to us, pray with us, and see the work of God in the world with us, is precious.

Prayer

Thank you God for the presence of other Christians. Thank you for their presence in my life. Help me share my journey with them, and help them share their journey with me. Remind me that, even when I'm lonely, I have a whole, huge Church who is caring for me and praying for me. And, of course, I always have you, God.

Sunday, August 16th, 2026

The Lord is my strength and my song, *
and he has become my salvation.

Psalm 118:14

Isn't singing so much fun? For me, the best place to sing is in the car. You can turn up the volume and really belt out a song. I also do something called *karaoke*, where you get to sing with your friends. There are also times, however, when I like to sing quietly. I sing my morning prayers when it's just me and God in the morning, and it feels so good to wake up with my voice lifted in song.

When do you sing? What kinds of songs do you sing? Or do you not like to sing, but just listen to music? What's your favorite song? Do you play an instrument? There are just so many questions to ask and so many things to talk about when it comes to music.

Psalms, if you remember, are songs, and they're supposed to be sung. At my church, we sing the Psalms during Lent, but there are a lot of hymns that rework a Psalm and put it to music. Here, though, in Psalm 118, the song writer compares God to music. Isn't that interesting? And it's not just that "The Lord" is *like* music, but that "The Lord is my song." What does that mean?

Part of the answer is found in the word "my." When you feel best, when all things are going right, when everything seems to make sense, doesn't it feel like you're a song? The flow of music, the beat, the rise and fall of our voices and our instruments, it all seems "right" somehow. And for the Psalmist, when he (or she) feels "right," it feels like a song, and that song feels like God.

God can "feel" like a lot of different things. God can seem calm and peaceful. God can encourage us and push us forward when things are hard. God can be exciting, and God can make us want to sing. And at our best, God is our song.

Activity

Listen to your favorite song and say some thanksgivings: for the artists who made the song, for the people who recorded it, and for God for giving everyone the inspiration to create such wonderful things like songs.

Wednesday, August 19th, 2026

- 1 The Lord is my shepherd; * I shall not be in want.
2 He makes me lie down in green pastures * and leads me beside still waters.
3 He revives my soul * and guides me along right pathways for his Name's sake.
4 Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I shall fear no evil; *
for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.
5 You spread a table before me in the presence of those who trouble me; *
you have anointed my head with oil, and my cup is running over.
6 Surely your goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, *
and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

Psalm 23

Psalm 23 is the most famous psalm in the entire Bible. Many people memorize this psalm and can recite it as easily as they can pray the Lord's Prayer. It brings many people a great deal of comfort and solace when they are feeling lost, confused, or sad. Read through it again and think about (and pray for) people who turn to this psalm in dark times.

We go to the Bible for many reasons. It is not just any book. It's our Scriptures, and Christians believe that it is the Word of God. That doesn't mean that God literally *wrote* the Bible, or that he told the people who did write it exactly what to write. Christians believe that God inspired many different people to think about God, pray with God, and consider other people in their community and what they might need to hear about God. This psalm comes from an author who thought very long and very hard about what to say to people when they felt deep sorrow.

One reason we read the Bible is so that we can find our favorite parts. This way, when we are feeling sad, or maybe when we're feeling happy, or any other emotions, we can see how God is guiding us and leading us. The Bible is for our whole life, and we go to it with all our emotions, all our experiences, all our hopes, and all our dreams.

Activity

Ask your grandparents about this psalm. Read them the first line, "The Lord is my Shepherd," and see if they can quote the rest of it. They may know a different translation, but it's still the same psalm. Talk to them a bit about what it means to them.

Sunday, August 23rd, 2026

A dispute also arose among the disciples as to which one of them was to be regarded as the greatest. But Jesus said to them, 'The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those in authority over them are called benefactors. But not so with you; rather the greatest among you must become like the youngest, and the leader like one who serves. For who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one at the table? But I am among you as one who serves.

Luke 22:24-27

Who is the best soccer player? Whoever scores the most goals, right? Who is the best baseball player? The one who hits the most home runs or who runs the bases the fastest. How about at your school? Who is the best at sports? Who is the coolest? Who has the best personality? Who is the best looking?

We often ask these questions, and, unfortunately, we often live our lives thinking that the person who is the best at sports, the coolest person, or the best looking person is somehow better than others. Jesus' disciples thought like this, too. They wanted to know who among them was the greatest. Who knew Jesus' teachings the best? Who got to sit next to him at dinner? Who would take over his job as teacher when he retired or died? This was an important question for the disciples, and they talked about it a lot.

Jesus' response surprised them: the youngest of you. The least. The one who isn't "puffed up with pride." The humble one. The one who doesn't want to be the greatest.

For Jesus, people aren't important because they can do great things. They're not important because they're good at sports, or they were elected student body president, or everyone seems to like them. Jesus simply loves everyone, whether they're good at sports or math or reading or whatever. Our job as Christians is to be humble before everyone's needs and hopes, not shove our own needs in other people's faces.

Prayer

God, may I remain humble before the great things you do in me and in others.

Wednesday, August 26th, 2026

‘Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs, which on the outside look beautiful, but inside they are full of the bones of the dead and of all kinds of filth. So you also on the outside look righteous to others, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.’

Matthew 23:27-28

We talk about the love and grace of God, especially in Jesus’ ministry, but did you know that Jesus often got frustrated with people? In his day, there were many people who felt that they were better than other people and so looked down on them. Why? Because they said they knew God better than anyone else. They understood Scripture better than other people, and they were better teachers than other people.

Were they? Well, if you read Wednesday’s meditation last week, you may remember that, for Jesus, the best are those who are humble. That doesn’t mean that we can’t enjoy our God-given skills and perform music or play sports well or anything. It means that we need to remember that we don’t know everything, that our needs are not always as important as the needs of others, and, even if we are really good at something, not to throw it in other people’s faces.

Jesus is worried about people’s hearts, not what they can do on the outside. People can get all dressed up with pretty clothes and make-up, but they might be actually very sad on the inside. People can put on bright smiles and talk as if nothing is wrong, but they can actually be hurting. And sometimes we’re not always up for smiling and laughing, but we are feeling alright and actually are pretty happy on the inside. What matters for Jesus is what’s in our hearts.

Activity

When you’re talking to someone, pause for a little and think about what might be going on inside of their hearts. We can’t read people’s minds, of course, but a lot of people put on a brave face when, in fact, they’re not feeling all that brave at all. Pray that that person is feeling okay, and that whatever is going on in their hearts, that God is with them.

Sunday, August 30th, 2026

‘Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

‘Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

‘Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

‘Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

‘Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.

‘Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

‘Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

‘Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

‘Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Matthew 5:3-12

These are a version of the Beatitudes, which are probably the most famous sayings of Jesus Christ. Read them again. In a way, they don’t make sense, and for those who first heard them 2,000 years ago, they didn’t make much sense either.

How can the poor in spirit be “blessed?” Or those who mourn? Or the meek? Or any of these kinds of people. Aren’t these people who we should pity? Who we should seek out and help? Aren’t they the ones who are hurting? In many cases, yes, they are, but we should ask ourselves, first, what it means to be “blessed.”

Being blessed doesn’t necessarily mean that good things are happening to you. It doesn’t mean that God is on your side *and so* is making your life all hunky dory, peachy keen. Being blessed *does* mean that God is with you, but God is with those who are poor, who mourn, who are meek because they need God’s help. God is with those who are merciful, who are pure in heart, who are peacemakers, because that is not only how God acts in the world but *who God is*. And the world isn’t made for those who are proud, who lord it over others, who look down on people, or who hurt people. The world is made for those who are gentle and humble in heart.

Read

Read the Beatitudes again. This is peak literature.

Somedays' Meditations

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