



## THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURES

1 Corinthians 15:35-57,  
John 14:1-4, Luke 23:39-43

### DAY 1

#### ***What is significant about All Saint's Day?***

In the early days, Christians had to meet secretly and developed traditions of honoring the anniversary of local martyrs' deaths. However, during the terrible days of persecution under such emperors as Nero and Diocletian, the number of martyrs became so great that a separate day could not be assigned to each. So, one day was established to remember them all. On the first recorded All Saints' Day in 397 A.D., St. Basil of Caesarea invited all the Christians of the province of Pontus for a feast honoring the fallen. Things improved dramatically for Christians after the Roman Emperor Constantine became a believer.

The first recorded church-wide All Saints' Day was celebrated on May 13, 609, when Pope Boniface IV consecrated Rome's Pantheon as a church. Built as a pagan temple to the Roman gods, the ancient architectural wonder was dedicated to Mary and all the martyrs. May 13 was declared the Feast of Mary and the Martyrs. Why May 13? Some believe it was Boniface's attempt to redeem the Roman Feast of the Lemures in which the malevolent and restless spirits of the dead were honored.

Today in many protestant churches, All Saints' Day commemorates all heroes of the faith and is celebrated on the Saturday between October 31 and November 6. As United Methodists, we celebrate it on the first Sunday in

November, honoring members of the local congregation who died during the past year. A candle is lit, or the church bell is rung as each person's name is called out as a way of remembering the life of the faithful.

- **As you read the history of All Saint's Day, what are your thoughts? Why is it important?**
- **Light has always been a sign of God's goodness when mentioned in the Bible. What are your thoughts about the lighting of candles when one of our deceased members is read? If you know of someone whose name was read, what memories do you have of them that made a difference in your faith journey?**

## **DAY 2**

Celebrating the "saints" of the church is a time-honored tradition. In the hymn, "The Church's One Foundation," Samuel Stone describes the deep connection between God's church and God's people. He writes:

*"We now on earth have union  
with God the Three in One,  
and share through faith communion  
with those whose rest is won.  
Oh, happy ones, and holy!  
Lord, give us grace that we  
like them, the meek and lowly,  
on high may dwell with thee."*

- **What does the Bible say about our connection with our loved ones after their death?**
- **As you read the verse from the hymn, what speaks to you about All Saints' Day?**

## **DAY 3**

**Read [1 Corinthians 15:35-57](#)**

- **Many wonder about life after death. As Christians, we call this "resurrection." Jesus was the first to be raised on Easter Sunday and when he appeared to his disciples afterwards, he no longer had a physical body. What does Paul say about that in today's scripture?**
- **Paul uses words such as "perishable" and "imperishable." He notes that only that which is "imperishable" may inherit eternal life. Why is this true?**
- **He also mentions that death no longer "stings." What do you feel he is addressing? How can the hurt from death be removed?**

## **DAY 4**

The Kaddish is a prayer synonymous with Jewish mourning. [Click here](#) to read an English translation of the Kaddish.

How interesting that this prayer intended for the mourners does not mention death or consolation. It does not speak of loss, sadness, or bereavement. The literal meaning of Kaddish is "holy" and the prayer is a doxology listing God's holy attributes: Blessed, praised, honored, extolled glorified, adored and exalted.

These are hard words for mourners. It is hard to praise the God who permitted the death of a loved one. Yet for centuries Jewish tradition has placed this prayer in the mouths of people with no taste for praise. Its purpose is to turn our thoughts from death and loss to focus on the attributes of God. For God created the world and human beings and called it all good. And death is a part of life. Says Psalm 89:48, *"Who can live and never see death?"*

The Kaddish intends that mourners turn away from death and choose life. It intends that we take notice of our surroundings- the love of God that guides and preserves our innermost being in this life and the next.

- **What are the similarities of the Jewish Kaddish and Christian teaching?**
- **In both Judaism and Christianity, God's presence and grace for the mourner is real. Think of a time when you felt the strong presence of God in your time of mourning. Reflect on what you experienced in those moments.**

## **DAY 5**

Read [John 14:1-4](#); [Luke 23:39-43](#)

- **What does Jesus say about death in both passages?**
- **In John 14, Jesus describes a house. What is significant about the house? Why do you think he mentions it to the disciples now?**
- **In Luke 23, Jesus makes resurrection real and gives hope to the repentant thief. How does he describe resurrection?**
- **Notice the three things Jesus says to the thief: Today, You will be with Me, in paradise. What do you think that says about when the resurrection happens?**
- **Look back at John 14:3. How do you feel when Jesus says, "I will come back for you?"**

## **DAY 6**

Today is a day of reflection and prayer. Think of those that have passed that you continue to love and cherish. Spend some time remembering and celebrating them. Thank God for the time you had with them, and for God's gift of eternal life.