

Scripture and Racial Healing

Prepared by Interwoven Congregations

Working for racial healing is a long-term venture which for many people is animated by their faith. Thankfully, God guides us on this path through the Spirit and a rich Biblical witness that testifies to God's love for all people and a commitment to justice. Below is a selection of Biblical passages which we hope will support you, inspire you, challenge you and give you hope as you work for racial healing.

In **Part I** we provide a summary listing of a of Biblical topics which speak to racial healing. In **Part II**, we list specific passages under each topic. **Part III** contains the text of all the passages. If there is a scriptural passage missing from our list that is especially significant to you in your work for racial healing (whether from the Bible or another sacred text), we would be grateful if you would share it with us at www.interwovencongregations.org.

Part I – Summary List of Biblical Topics that Relate to Racial Healing

- a. All People are Made in the Image of God
- b. God Calls us to Love one Another
- c. God Calls for Justice
- d. God Calls us to Welcome the Stranger and Alien
- e. The Kingdom of God is open to all People
- f. We are one in Christ Jesus
- g. God Intends and Embraces Diversity
- h. God Shows no Partiality
- i. (And yet) God Expresses Particular Care for the Marginalized and Oppressed
- j. God Promises Liberation for the Oppressed
- k. God is Sovereign and Can Always do Something New
- l. As People of Faith, We Lament Injustice and Suffering
- m. God Calls us to Confess our Sins
- n. God Calls us to Repent
- o. God Calls us to Make Amends
- p. God Calls us to Forgive
- q. God Calls us to Listen
- r. God Calls us to a Ministry of Reconciliation
- s. God Invites us not to Fear
- t. God Call us to Hope

Part II – List of Passages by Topic

a. All people are made in the image of God

- Genesis 1:26 – 28, 31
- Genesis 5:1
- Colossians 1:16

b. God Calls us to Love One Another

- Leviticus 19:18
- Leviticus 19:34
- Mark 12:28 -31
- Matthew 22: 34-40
- Luke 10: 25-28
- John 13: 34-35
- Romans 13:8
- Galatians 5: 13-14
- James 2:8

c. God Calls for Justice

- Deuteronomy 10: 17-18
- Deuteronomy 24: 17 – 18
- Psalm 33: 4-5
- Jeremiah 7:5-7
- Jeremiah 9:23-24
- Jeremiah 22:3
- Micah 6:8
- Amos 5:15a, 24
- Matthew 5: 6
- Matthew 25: 31-46

d. God Calls us to Welcome the Stranger and the Alien

- Exodus 22:21
- Deuteronomy 10:19
- Leviticus 19: 33-34
- Zechariah 7:9 – 10
- Hebrews 13:2

e. The Kingdom of God is open to all People

- Isaiah 42:6
- Luke 13:29-30
- Luke 24: 46-48
- John 3:16-17
- Matthew 28:19
- Acts 2:1-12, 21
- Acts 17: 26-27
- Revelation 7:9

f. We are One in Christ Jesus

- John 17: 20-23
- 1 Corinthians 12: 4-27
- Galatians 3:28
- Ephesians 4: 1-6
- Colossians 3:11

g. God Intends and Embraces Diversity

- Acts 2: 1-11
- Acts 10: 34-35
- Acts 17: 24 – 27
- 1 Corinthians 12: 12-14

h. God Shows no Partiality

- Acts 10:34
- Romans 2:11
- James 2: 1-9

i. (And yet) God Expresses a Particular Care for those who are Marginalized and Oppressed

- Leviticus 19:10
- Deuteronomy 24: 19 – 22
- Isaiah 49: 8 – 13
- Isaiah 58: 6-9
- Matthew 5: 3-5
- Matthew 11:28
- Matthew 25: 37 - 40
- Luke 1: 46 - 53

- Luke 6: 20-22
- Luke 13:30
- Luke 14: 10-14

j. God Promises Liberation for those Who are Oppressed

- Exodus 6: 5-7
- Isaiah 61: 1-3
- Luke 4:18-19
- Acts 5: 17-20

k. God is Sovereign and Can Always do Something New

- Isaiah 43: 18 – 20
- Matthew 28:1-6, 20b
- Mark 16:5 – 6
- Luke 24: 1-3, 30 – 31
- John 20: 1-2, 26-29
- Acts 10: 1-35

l. As People of Faith, We Lament Injustice and Suffering

- Jeremiah 4: 19-20
- Jeremiah 8:15, 22-23
- Jeremiah 31:15
- Psalm 6
- Psalm 44: 22-26
- Romans 12:15
- James 4: 8-10

m. God Calls us to Confess our Sins

- 2 Samuel 12: 4-9, 13
- Ezra 9: 5-7
- Daniel 9:4 - 11
- Psalm 32: 1-5
- Psalm 51: 1-12
- Proverbs 28:13
- Romans 3:9-12
- James 5:16
- 1 John 1:8-10

n. God Calls us to Repent

- Isaiah 1: 16-17
- Lamentations 3:40
- Ezekiel 14:6
- Matthew 4:17
- Mark 1:15
- Luke 5:32
- Luke 15:10
- Acts 2:38
- Acts 3:19
- 2 Corinthians 7:10
- James 4: 8-10

o. God Calls us to Make Amends

- Exodus 21: 18 – 19, 22 – 27, 33-34
- Exodus 22:1-6
- Leviticus 6: 1-6
- Numbers 5: 5-7
- Deuteronomy 15: 12-15
- 2 Samuel 12: 4-6
- Ezra 6: 6-12
- Luke 19: 1-10

p. God Calls us to Forgive

- Matthew 6: 9-15
- Matthew 18:21-35
- Luke 11: 1-4
- Luke 17:3-4
- Ephesians 4: 31-32
- James 1: 19-20

q. God Calls us to Listen

- Ecclesiastes 3: 1, 7b
- Proverbs 11:14
- Proverbs 18:13
- Matthew 11:15
- James 1: 19-20

r. God Calls us to a Ministry of Reconciliation

- Matthew 5: 23 – 24
- Romans 12:16 - 21
- 2 Corinthians 5: 17 – 21
- Colossians 1:19 – 23

s. God Invites us not to Fear

- Deuteronomy 31:8
- Joshua 1:9
- Isaiah 41: 9-10
- Isaiah 43:1
- Jeremiah 1: 7-8
- Psalm 23:4
- Psalm 27:1
- Psalm 118: 5-6
- Isaiah 35: 3-4
- Matthew 14:26-28
- Luke 1:30
- Luke 2:10
- Luke 5: 9-11
- John 14:27
- Philippians 4: 4-7, 13
- Hebrews 13: 5-7

t. God Call us to Hope

- Jeremiah 29:11
- Psalm 62:5
- Lamentations 3:17-24
- Romans 5: 1-5
- Romans 8: 22-25
- Romans 12:12
- Romans 15:13
- Hebrews 6:19-20
- Hebrews 10:23
- Hebrews 11:1

Part III – Full Quotation of all Passages by Topic (NRSV translation)

a. All people are made in the image of God

Genesis 1:26 – 28, 31 ²⁶Then God said, “Let us make humankind^[c] in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth,^[d] and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.” ²⁷So God created humankind^[e] in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. ²⁸God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth” . . . ³¹God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

Genesis 5:1 This is the list of the descendants of Adam. When God created humankind, he made them in the likeness of God.

Colossians 1:16 for in him [Christ] all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or powers—all things have been created through him and for him.

b. God Calls us to Love One Another

Leviticus 19:18 You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against any of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the Lord.

Leviticus 19: 34 The alien who resides with you shall be to you as the citizen among you; you shall love the alien as yourself, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God.

Mark 12:28 -31 ²⁸One of the scribes came near and heard them disputing with one another, and seeing that he answered them well, he asked him, “Which commandment is the first of all?” ²⁹Jesus answered, “The first is, ‘Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one; ³⁰you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.’ ³¹The second is this, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.”

Matthew 22: 34-40 ³⁴When the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together, ³⁵and one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him. ³⁶“Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?” ³⁷He said to him, “‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ ³⁸This is the greatest and first commandment. ³⁹And a second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ ⁴⁰On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.”

Luke 10: 25-28 ²⁵Just then a lawyer stood up to test Jesus.^[a] “Teacher,” he said, “what must I do to inherit eternal life?” ²⁶He said to him, “What is written in the law? What do you read

there?” ²⁷ He answered, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself.” ²⁸ And he said to him, “You have given the right answer; do this, and you will live.”

John 13: 34-35 ³⁴ I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. ³⁵ By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”

Romans 13:8 ⁸ Owe no one anything, except to love one another; for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law.

Galatians 5: 13-14 ¹³ For you were called to freedom, brothers and sisters;^[a] only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for self-indulgence,^[b] but through love become slaves to one another. ¹⁴ For the whole law is summed up in a single commandment, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”

James 2:8 ⁸ You do well if you really fulfill the royal law according to the scripture, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”

c. God Calls for Justice

Deuteronomy 10: 17-18 For the LORD your God . . . executes justice for the orphan and the widow, and who loves the strangers, providing them food and clothing.

Deuteronomy 24: 17 – 18 ¹⁷ You shall not deprive a resident alien or an orphan of justice; you shall not take a widow’s garment in pledge. ¹⁸ Remember that you were a slave in Egypt and the LORD your God redeemed you from there; therefore I command you to do this.

Psalms 33:4-5 ⁴ For the word of the LORD is upright, and all his work is done in faithfulness. ⁵ He loves righteousness and justice; the earth is full of the steadfast love of the LORD.

Jeremiah 7:5-7 ⁵ For if you truly amend your ways and your doings, if you truly act justly one with another, ⁶ if you do not oppress the alien, the orphan, and the widow, or shed innocent blood in this place, and if you do not go after other gods to your own hurt, ⁷ then I will dwell with you in this place, in the land that I gave of old to your ancestors forever and ever.

Jeremiah 9:23-24 ²³ Thus says the Lord: Do not let the wise boast in their wisdom, do not let the mighty boast in their might, do not let the wealthy boast in their wealth; ²⁴ but let those who boast boast in this, that they understand and know me, that I am the Lord; I act with steadfast love, justice, and righteousness in the earth, for in these things I delight, says the Lord.

Jeremiah 22:3 Thus says the LORD: Act with justice and righteousness, and deliver from the hand of the oppressor anyone who has been robbed. And do no wrong or violence to the alien, the orphan, and the widow, or shed innocent blood in this place.

Micah 6:8 He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?

Amos 5:15a, 24 Hate evil and love good, and establish justice in the gate . . . But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.

Matthew 5: 6 Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

Matthew 25: 31-46 ³¹ “When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory. ³² All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, ³³ and he will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left. ³⁴ Then the king will say to those at his right hand, ‘Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; ³⁵ for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, ³⁶ I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.’ ³⁷ Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? ³⁸ And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? ³⁹ And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?’ ⁴⁰ And the king will answer them, ‘Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, ^[a] you did it to me.’ ⁴¹ Then he will say to those at his left hand, ‘You that are accursed, depart from me into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels; ⁴² for I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, ⁴³ I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not give me clothing, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.’ ⁴⁴ Then they also will answer, ‘Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not take care of you?’ ⁴⁵ Then he will answer them, ‘Truly I tell you, just as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.’ ⁴⁶ And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”

[d. God Calls us to Welcome the Stranger and the Alien](#)

Exodus 22:21 You shall not wrong or oppress a resident alien, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt.

Deuteronomy 10:19 You shall also love the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.

Leviticus 19: 33-34 ³³ When an alien resides with you in your land, you shall not oppress the alien. ³⁴ The alien who resides with you shall be to you as the citizen among you; you shall love the alien as yourself, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God.

Zechariah 7:9 – 10 Do not oppress the alien, widow or orphan. Thus says the LORD . . . show kindness and mercy to one another; do not oppress the widow, the orphan, the alien, or the poor.

Hebrews 13:2 Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it.

e. The Kingdom of God is open to all People

Isaiah 42:6 I am the LORD, I have called you in righteousness, I have taken you by the hand and kept you; I have given you as a covenant to the people, a light to the nations,

Matthew 9:9-11 ⁹As Jesus was walking along, he saw a man called Matthew sitting at the tax booth; and he said to him, “Follow me.” And he got up and followed him. ¹⁰And as he sat at dinner^[a] in the house, many tax collectors and sinners came and were sitting^[b] with him and his disciples. ¹¹When the Pharisees saw this, they said to his disciples, “Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?”

Matthew 28:19 Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

Luke 13:29-30 ²⁹Then people will come from east and west, from north and south, and will eat in the kingdom of God. ³⁰Indeed, some are last who will be first, and some are first who will be last.”

Luke 15: 1-4 Now all the tax collectors and sinners were coming near to listen to him. ²And the Pharisees and the scribes were grumbling and saying, “This fellow welcomes sinners and eats with them.” ³So he told them this parable: ⁴“Which one of you, having a hundred sheep and losing one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness and go after the one that is lost until he finds it?

Luke 24: 46-48 ⁴⁶and he said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day, ⁴⁷and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem.

John 3:16-17 ¹⁶“For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. ¹⁷“Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.

John 4: 7-9 ⁷A Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus said to her, “Give me a drink.” ⁸(His disciples had gone to the city to buy food.) ⁹The Samaritan woman said to him, “How is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samaria?”

Acts 2: 1-12, 21 When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. ²And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. ³Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. ⁴All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability. ⁵Now there were devout

Jews from every nation under heaven living in Jerusalem. ⁶ And at this sound the crowd gathered and was bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in the native language of each. ⁷ Amazed and astonished, they asked, “Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? ⁸ And how is it that we hear, each of us, in our own native language? ⁹ Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, ¹⁰ Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, ¹¹ Cretans and Arabs—in our own languages we hear them speaking about God’s deeds of power.” ¹² All were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, “What does this mean?” . . . Then everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.’

Acts 8: 26 -29, 36 - 38 ²⁶Then an angel of the Lord said to Philip, “Get up and go toward the south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.” (This is a wilderness road.) ²⁷ So he got up and went. Now there was an Ethiopian eunuch, a court official of the Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, in charge of her entire treasury. He had come to Jerusalem to worship ²⁸ and was returning home; seated in his chariot, he was reading the prophet Isaiah. ²⁹ Then the Spirit said to Philip, “Go over to this chariot and join it.” . . . ³⁶ As they were going along the road, they came to some water; and the eunuch said, “Look, here is water! What is to prevent me from being baptized?” ³⁸ He commanded the chariot to stop, and both of them, Philip and the eunuch, went down into the water, and Philip^[i] baptized him.

Acts 17: 24 – 27 ²⁴The God who made the world and everything in it, he who is Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in shrines made by human hands, ²⁵ nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mortals life and breath and all things. ²⁶ From one ancestor he made all nations to inhabit the whole earth, and he allotted the times of their existence and the boundaries of the places where they would live, ²⁷ so that they would search for God and perhaps grope for him and find him—though indeed he is not far from each one of us.

Revelation 7:9 After this I looked, and there was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, robed in white, with palm branches in their hands.

[f. We are One in Christ Jesus](#)

John 17: 20-23 ²⁰“I ask not only on behalf of these, but also on behalf of those who will believe in me through their word, ²¹ that they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us,^[a] so that the world may believe that you have sent me. ²² The glory that you have given me I have given them, so that they may be one, as we are one, ²³ I in them and you in me, that they may become completely one, so that the world may know that you have sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.

1 Corinthians 12:4 – 27 ⁴ Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; ⁵ and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; ⁶ and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. ⁷ To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. ⁸ To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, ⁹ to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, ¹⁰ to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the discernment of spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. ¹¹ All these are activated by one and the same Spirit, who allots to each one individually just as the Spirit chooses. ¹² For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. ¹³ For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and we were all made to drink of one Spirit. ¹⁴ Indeed, the body does not consist of one member but of many. ¹⁵ If the foot would say, “Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,” that would not make it any less a part of the body. ¹⁶ And if the ear would say, “Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,” that would not make it any less a part of the body. ¹⁷ If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole body were hearing, where would the sense of smell be? ¹⁸ But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. ¹⁹ If all were a single member, where would the body be? ²⁰ As it is, there are many members, yet one body. ²¹ The eye cannot say to the hand, “I have no need of you,” nor again the head to the feet, “I have no need of you.” ²² On the contrary, the members of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, ²³ and those members of the body that we think less honorable we clothe with greater honor, and our less respectable members are treated with greater respect; ²⁴ whereas our more respectable members do not need this. But God has so arranged the body, giving the greater honor to the inferior member, ²⁵ that there may be no dissension within the body, but the members may have the same care for one another. ²⁶ If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honored, all rejoice together with it. ²⁷ Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it.

Galatians 3:28 ²⁸ There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus.

Ephesians 4: 1-6 I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, ² with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, ³ making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. ⁴ There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, ⁵ one Lord, one faith, one baptism, ⁶ one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all.

Colossians 3:11 In that renewal, there is no longer Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and free, but Christ is all in all!

g. God Intends and Embraces Diversity

Acts 2: 1-11 When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. 2 And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. 3 Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. 4 All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability. 5 Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven living in Jerusalem. 6 And at this sound the crowd gathered and was bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in the native language of each. 7 Amazed and astonished, they asked, “Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? 8 And how is it that we hear, each of us, in our own native language? 9 Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, 10 Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, 11 Cretans and Arabs—in our own languages we hear them speaking about God’s deeds of power.”

Acts 10: 34 - 35 Then Peter began to speak to them: “I truly understand that God shows no partiality,³⁵ but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him. *(see full passage under section ‘j’.)*

Acts 17: 24 – 27 ²⁴The God who made the world and everything in it, he who is Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in shrines made by human hands,²⁵ nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mortals life and breath and all things.²⁶ From one ancestor he made all nations to inhabit the whole earth, and he allotted the times of their existence and the boundaries of the places where they would live,²⁷ so that they would search for God and perhaps grope for him and find him—though indeed he is not far from each one of us.

1 Corinthians 12: 12-14 ¹²For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ.¹³ For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.¹⁴ Indeed, the body does not consist of one member but of many.

h. God Shows no Partiality

Acts 10:34 - 35 34 Then Peter began to speak to them: “I truly understand that God shows no partiality, 35 but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him.

Romans 2:11 God shows no partiality.

James 2: 1-9 My brothers and sisters, do you with your acts of favoritism really believe in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ? ² For if a person with gold rings and in fine clothes comes into your assembly, and if a poor person in dirty clothes also comes in, ³ and if you take notice of the one wearing the fine clothes and say, "Have a seat here, please," while to the one who is poor you say, "Stand there," or, "Sit at my feet," ⁴ have you not made distinctions among yourselves, and become judges with evil thoughts? ⁵ Listen, my beloved brothers and sisters. Has not God chosen the poor in the world to be rich in faith and to be heirs of the kingdom that he has promised to those who love him? ⁶ But you have dishonored the poor. Is it not the rich who oppress you? Is it not they who drag you into court? ⁷ Is it not they who blaspheme the excellent name that was invoked over you? ⁸ You do well if you really fulfill the royal law according to the scripture, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." ⁹ But if you show partiality, you commit sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors.

i. (And yet) God Expresses a Particular Care for the Marginalized and the Oppressed

Leviticus 19:10 You shall not strip your vineyard bare, or gather the fallen grapes of your vineyard; you shall leave them for the poor and the alien: I am the LORD your God.

Deuteronomy 24: 19 – 22 ¹⁹ When you reap your harvest in your field and forget a sheaf in the field, you shall not go back to get it; it shall be left for the alien, the orphan, and the widow, so that the LORD your God may bless you in all your undertakings. ²⁰ When you beat your olive trees, do not strip what is left; it shall be for the alien, the orphan, and the widow. ²¹ When you gather the grapes of your vineyard, do not glean what is left; it shall be for the alien, the orphan, and the widow. ²² Remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt; therefore I am commanding you to do this.

Isaiah 49: 8 – 13 ⁸ Thus says the Lord: In a time of favor I have answered you, on a day of salvation I have helped you; I have kept you and given you as a covenant to the people, to establish the land, to apportion the desolate heritages; ⁹ saying to the prisoners, "Come out," to those who are in darkness, "Show yourselves." They shall feed along the ways, on all the bare heights shall be their pasture; ¹⁰ they shall not hunger or thirst, neither scorching wind nor sun shall strike them down, for he who has pity on them will lead them, and by springs of water will guide them. ¹¹ And I will turn all my mountains into a road, and my highways shall be raised up. ¹² Lo, these shall come from far away, and lo, these from the north and from the west, and these from the land of Syene. ¹³ Sing for joy, O heavens, and exult, O earth; break forth, O mountains, into singing! For the Lord has comforted his people, and will have compassion on his suffering ones.

Isaiah 58: 6-9a ⁶ Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke?

⁷ Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover them, and not to hide yourself from your own kin?

⁸ Then your light shall break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring up quickly; your vindicator shall go before you, the glory of the LORD shall be your rear guard.

⁹ Then you shall call, and the LORD will answer; you shall cry for help, and he will say, Here I am.

Matthew 5: 3-5 ³ “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. ⁴ “Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted. ⁵ “Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

Matthew 11:28 “Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest.

Matthew 25: 37-40 ³⁷ Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? ³⁸ And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? ³⁹ And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?’ ⁴⁰ And the king will answer them, ‘Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.’

Luke 1: 46-53 ⁴⁶ And Mary^[a] said, “My soul magnifies the Lord, ⁴⁷ and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, ⁴⁸ for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant.

Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed; ⁴⁹ for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name.

⁵⁰ His mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation.

⁵¹ He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts. ⁵² He has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly;

⁵³ he has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty.

Luke 6: 20 - 22 ²⁰ Then he looked up at his disciples and said: “Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God. ²¹ “Blessed are you who are hungry now, for you will be filled. “Blessed are you who weep now, for you will laugh. ²² “Blessed are you when people hate you, and when they exclude you, revile you, and defame you on account of the Son of Man.

Luke 13: 30 ³⁰ Indeed, some are last who will be first, and some are first who will be last.”

Luke 14: 10-14 ¹⁰ But when you are invited, go and sit down at the lowest place, so that when your host comes, he may say to you, ‘Friend, move up higher’; then you will be honored in the presence of all who sit at the table with you. ¹¹ For all who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.” ¹² He said also to the one who had invited him, “When you give a luncheon or a dinner, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or rich neighbors, in case they may invite you in return, and you would be repaid. ¹³ But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind. ¹⁴ And you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you, for you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous.”

j. God Promises Liberation for those Who are Oppressed

Exodus 6: 5-7 ⁵ I have also heard the groaning of the Israelites whom the Egyptians are holding as slaves, and I have remembered my covenant. ⁶ Say therefore to the Israelites, ‘I am the LORD, and I will free you from the burdens of the Egyptians and deliver you from slavery to them. I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with mighty acts of judgment. ⁷ I will take you as my people, and I will be your God. You shall know that I am the LORD your God, who has freed you from the burdens of the Egyptians.

Isaiah 58: 6 Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke?

Isaiah 61: 1-3 The spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners; ² to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn; ³ to provide for those who mourn in Zion— to give them a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit

Luke 4: 18 – 19 ¹⁸ “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, ¹⁹ to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”

k. God is Sovereign and Can Always do Something New

Isaiah 43: 18 – 20 ¹⁸ Do not remember the former things, or consider the things of old. ¹⁹ I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.

Matthew 28: 1-6, 20b After the sabbath, as the first day of the week was dawning, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb. ² And suddenly there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord, descending from heaven, came and rolled back the stone and sat on it. ³ His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow. ⁴ For fear of him the guards shook and became like dead men. ⁵ But the angel said to the women, “Do not be afraid; I know that you are looking for Jesus who was crucified. ⁶ He is not here; for he has been raised, as he said . . . ¹⁸ And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

Mark 16: 5-6 ⁵ As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man, dressed in a white robe, sitting on the right side; and they were alarmed. ⁶ But he said to them, “Do not be alarmed; you are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has been raised; he is not here.

Luke 24: 1-3, 13, 30-31 But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they came to the tomb, taking the spices that they had prepared. ²They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, ³but when they went in, they did not find the body . . . ¹³Now on that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles^[1] from Jerusalem . . . ³⁰When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. ³¹Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him; and he vanished from their sight.

John 20: 1-2, 26-29 Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the tomb. ²So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, “They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him.” . . . ²⁶A week later his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were shut, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you.” ²⁷Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe.” ²⁸Thomas answered him, “My Lord and my God!” ²⁹Jesus said to him, “Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe.”

Acts 10: 1 – 35 In Caesarea there was a man named Cornelius, a centurion of the Italian Cohort, as it was called. ²He was a devout man who feared God with all his household; he gave alms generously to the people and prayed constantly to God. ³One afternoon at about three o’clock he had a vision in which he clearly saw an angel of God coming in and saying to him, “Cornelius.” ⁴He stared at him in terror and said, “What is it, Lord?” He answered, “Your prayers and your alms have ascended as a memorial before God. ⁵Now send men to Joppa for a certain Simon who is called Peter; ⁶he is lodging with Simon, a tanner, whose house is by the seaside.” ⁷When the angel who spoke to him had left, he called two of his slaves and a devout soldier from the ranks of those who served him, ⁸and after telling them everything, he sent them to Joppa.

⁹About noon the next day, as they were on their journey and approaching the city, Peter went up on the roof to pray. ¹⁰He became hungry and wanted something to eat; and while it was being prepared, he fell into a trance. ¹¹He saw the heaven opened and something like a large sheet coming down, being lowered to the ground by its four corners. ¹²In it were all kinds of four-footed creatures and reptiles and birds of the air. ¹³Then he heard a voice saying, “Get up, Peter; kill and eat.” ¹⁴But Peter said, “By no means, Lord; for I have never eaten anything that is profane or unclean.” ¹⁵The voice said to him again, a second time, “What God has made clean, you must not call profane.” ¹⁶This happened three times, and the thing was suddenly taken up to heaven.

¹⁷Now while Peter was greatly puzzled about what to make of the vision that he had seen, suddenly the men sent by Cornelius appeared. They were asking for Simon’s house and were standing by the gate. ¹⁸They called out to ask whether Simon, who was called Peter, was staying there. ¹⁹While Peter was still thinking about the vision, the Spirit said to him, “Look, three men are searching for you. ²⁰Now get up, go down, and go with them without hesitation;

for I have sent them.”²¹ So Peter went down to the men and said, “I am the one you are looking for; what is the reason for your coming?”²² They answered, “Cornelius, a centurion, an upright and God-fearing man, who is well spoken of by the whole Jewish nation, was directed by a holy angel to send for you to come to his house and to hear what you have to say.”²³ So Peter invited them in and gave them lodging.

The next day he got up and went with them, and some of the believers from Joppa accompanied him.²⁴ The following day they came to Caesarea. Cornelius was expecting them and had called together his relatives and close friends.²⁵ On Peter’s arrival Cornelius met him, and falling at his feet, worshiped him.²⁶ But Peter made him get up, saying, “Stand up; I am only a mortal.”²⁷ And as he talked with him, he went in and found that many had assembled;²⁸ and he said to them, “You yourselves know that it is unlawful for a Jew to associate with or to visit a Gentile; but God has shown me that I should not call anyone profane or unclean.²⁹ So when I was sent for, I came without objection. Now may I ask why you sent for me?”

³⁰ Cornelius replied, “Four days ago at this very hour, at three o’clock, I was praying in my house when suddenly a man in dazzling clothes stood before me.³¹ He said, ‘Cornelius, your prayer has been heard and your alms have been remembered before God.³² Send therefore to Joppa and ask for Simon, who is called Peter; he is staying in the home of Simon, a tanner, by the sea.’³³ Therefore I sent for you immediately, and you have been kind enough to come. So now all of us are here in the presence of God to listen to all that the Lord has commanded you to say.”³⁴ Then Peter began to speak to them: “I truly understand that God shows no partiality,³⁵ but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him.

[I. As People of Faith we Lament Injustice and Suffering](#)

Jeremiah 4: 19-20 My anguish, my anguish! I writhe in pain! Oh, the walls of my heart! My hearts is beating wildly; I cannot keep silent; for I hear the sound of the trumpet, the alarm of war. Disaster follows hard on disaster, the whole land is laid waste.

Jeremiah 8:15, 22-23 We look for peace, but find no good, for a time of healing, but there is terror instead Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there? Why then has the health ... of my people not been restored? -

Jeremiah 31:15 a voice is heard in Ramah ... Rachel is weeping for her children; she refuses to be comforted for her children, because they are not.

Psalms 6 ¹O LORD, do not rebuke me in your anger,
or discipline me in your wrath.

²Be gracious to me, O LORD, for I am languishing;

O LORD, heal me, for my bones are shaking with terror.

³My soul also is struck with terror, while you, O LORD—how long?

⁴Turn, O LORD, save my life; deliver me for the sake of your steadfast love.

⁵For in death there is no remembrance of you; in Sheol who can give you praise?

⁶ I am weary with my moaning; every night I flood my bed with tears;
I drench my couch with my weeping.
⁷ My eyes waste away because of grief; they grow weak because of all my foes.
⁸ Depart from me, all you workers of evil, for the LORD has heard the sound of my weeping.
⁹ The LORD has heard my supplication; the LORD accepts my prayer.
¹⁰ All my enemies shall be ashamed and struck with terror;
they shall turn back, and in a moment be put to shame.

Psalm 44: 23-26 ²³ Rouse yourself! Why do you sleep, O Lord?

Awake, do not cast us off forever!

²⁴ Why do you hide your face? Why do you forget our affliction and oppression?

²⁵ For we sink down to the dust; our bodies cling to the ground.

²⁶ Rise up, come to our help. Redeem us for the sake of your steadfast love.

Romans 12:15 Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep.

James 4: 8-10 ⁸ Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. ⁹ Lament and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned into mourning and your joy into dejection. ¹⁰ Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you.

[m. God Calls us to Confess our Sins](#)

2 Samuel 12: 4-9, 13 ⁴ Now there came a traveler to the rich man, and he was loath to take one of his own flock or herd to prepare for the wayfarer who had come to him, but he took the poor man's lamb, and prepared that for the guest who had come to him." ⁵ Then David's anger was greatly kindled against the man. He said to Nathan, "As the LORD lives, the man who has done this deserves to die; ⁶ he shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing, and because he had no pity."⁷ Nathan said to David, "You are the man! Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel: I anointed you king over Israel, and I rescued you from the hand of Saul; ⁸ I gave you your master's house, and your master's wives into your bosom, and gave you the house of Israel and of Judah; and if that had been too little, I would have added as much more. ⁹ Why have you despised the word of the LORD, to do what is evil in his sight? You have struck down Uriah the Hittite with the sword, and have taken his wife to be your wife, and have killed him with the sword of the Ammonites . . . ¹³ David said to Nathan, "I have sinned against the LORD." Nathan said to David, "Now the LORD has put away your sin; you shall not die.

Ezra 9: 5-7 ⁵ At the evening sacrifice I got up from my fasting, with my garments and my mantle torn, and fell on my knees, spread out my hands to the LORD my God, ⁶ and said, "O my God, I am too ashamed and embarrassed to lift my face to you, my God, for our iniquities have risen higher than our heads, and our guilt has mounted up to the heavens. ⁷ From the days of our ancestors to this day we have been deep in guilt, and for our iniquities we, our kings, and our priests have been handed over to the kings of the lands, to the sword, to captivity, to plundering, and to utter shame, as is now the case.

Daniel 9:4 – 11 ⁴ I prayed to the LORD my God and made confession, saying, “Ah, Lord, great and awesome God, keeping covenant and steadfast love with those who love you and keep your commandments, ⁵ we have sinned and done wrong, acted wickedly and rebelled, turning aside from your commandments and ordinances. ⁶ We have not listened to your servants the prophets, who spoke in your name to our kings, our princes, and our ancestors, and to all the people of the land. ⁷ “Righteousness is on your side, O Lord, but open shame, as at this day, falls on us, the people of Judah, the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and all Israel, those who are near and those who are far away, in all the lands to which you have driven them, because of the treachery that they have committed against you. ⁸ Open shame, O LORD, falls on us, our kings, our officials, and our ancestors, because we have sinned against you. ⁹ To the Lord our God belong mercy and forgiveness, for we have rebelled against him, ¹⁰ and have not obeyed the voice of the LORD our God by following his laws, which he set before us by his servants the prophets. ¹¹ “All Israel has transgressed your law and turned aside, refusing to obey your voice. So the curse and the oath written in the law of Moses, the servant of God, have been poured out upon us, because we have sinned against you.

Psalms 32: 1-5 ¹ Happy are those whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. ² Happy are those to whom the LORD imputes no iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit. ³ While I kept silence, my body wasted away through my groaning all day long. ⁴ For day and night your hand was heavy upon me; my strength was dried up^[a] as by the heat of summer. ⁵ Then I acknowledged my sin to you, and I did not hide my iniquity; I said, “I will confess my transgressions to the LORD,” and you forgave the guilt of my sin.

Psalms 51: 1-12 ¹ Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions. ² Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. ³ For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. ⁴ Against you, you alone, have I sinned, and done what is evil in your sight, so that you are justified in your sentence and blameless when you pass judgment. ⁵ Indeed, I was born guilty, a sinner when my mother conceived me. ⁶ You desire truth in the inward being; therefore teach me wisdom in my secret heart. ⁷ Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. ⁸ Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones that you have crushed rejoice. ⁹ Hide your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities. ¹⁰ Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right^[b] spirit within me. ¹¹ Do not cast me away from your presence, and do not take your holy spirit from me. ¹² Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and sustain in me a willing spirit.

Proverbs 28:13 No one who conceals transgressions will prosper, but one who confesses and forsakes them will obtain mercy.

Romans 3:9-12 ⁹ What then? Are we any better off?^[a] No, not at all; for we have already charged that all, both Jews and Greeks, are under the power of sin, ¹⁰ as it is written: “There is no one who is righteous, not even one; ¹¹ there is no one who has understanding, there is no one who seeks God. ¹² All have turned aside, together they have become worthless; there is no one who shows kindness, there is not even one.”

James 5:16 Therefore confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, so that you may be healed. The prayer of the righteous is powerful and effective.

1 John 1:8-10 ⁸If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. ⁹If we confess our sins, he who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. ¹⁰If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

n. God Calls us to Repent

Isaiah 1: 16-17 ¹⁶Wash yourselves; make yourselves clean; remove the evil of your doings from before my eyes; cease to do evil, ¹⁷learn to do good; seek justice, rescue the oppressed, defend the orphan, plead for the widow.

Lamentations 3:40 Let us test and examine our ways, and return to the LORD.

Ezekiel 14:6 Therefore say to the house of Israel, Thus says the Lord God: Repent and turn away from your idols; and turn away your faces from all your abominations.

Matthew 4:17 From that time Jesus began to proclaim, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.”

Mark 1:14-15 Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news.”

Luke 5:32 “I have come to call not the righteous but sinners to repentance.”

Luke 15:10 “Just so, I tell you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.”

Acts 2:38 Peter said to them, “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”

Acts 3:19 Repent therefore, and turn to God so that your sins may be wiped out,

2 Corinthians 7:10 For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation and brings no regret, but worldly grief produces death.

James 4: 8-10 ⁸Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. ⁹Lament and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned into mourning and your joy into dejection. ¹⁰Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you.

o. God Calls us to Make Amends

Exodus 21: 18 – 19, 22-27, 33-34 ¹⁸ When individuals quarrel and one strikes the other with a stone or fist so that the injured party, though not dead, is confined to bed, ¹⁹ but recovers and walks around outside with the help of a staff, then the assailant shall be free of liability, except to pay for the loss of time, and to arrange for full recovery . . . ²² When people who are fighting injure a pregnant woman so that there is a miscarriage, and yet no further harm follows, the one responsible shall be fined what the woman's husband demands, paying as much as the judges determine. ²³ If any harm follows, then you shall give life for life, ²⁴ eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, ²⁵ burn for burn, wound for wound, stripe for stripe. ²⁶ When a slaveowner strikes the eye of a male or female slave, destroying it, the owner shall let the slave go, a free person, to compensate for the eye. ²⁷ If the owner knocks out a tooth of a male or female slave, the slave shall be let go, a free person, to compensate for the tooth . . . ³³ If someone leaves a pit open, or digs a pit and does not cover it, and an ox or a donkey falls into it, ³⁴ the owner of the pit shall make restitution, giving money to its owner, but keeping the dead animal.

Exodus 22: 1-6 When someone steals an ox or a sheep, and slaughters it or sells it, the thief shall pay five oxen for an ox, and four sheep for a sheep.^[b] The thief shall make restitution, but if unable to do so, shall be sold for the theft. ⁴ When the animal, whether ox or donkey or sheep, is found alive in the thief's possession, the thief shall pay double. ² If a thief is found breaking in, and is beaten to death, no bloodguilt is incurred; ³ but if it happens after sunrise, bloodguilt is incurred. ⁵ When someone causes a field or vineyard to be grazed over, or lets livestock loose to graze in someone else's field, restitution shall be made from the best in the owner's field or vineyard. ⁶ When fire breaks out and catches in thorns so that the stacked grain or the standing grain or the field is consumed, the one who started the fire shall make full restitution.

Leviticus 6: 1-6 The LORD spoke to Moses, saying: ² When any of you sin and commit a trespass against the LORD by deceiving a neighbor in a matter of a deposit or a pledge, or by robbery, or if you have defrauded a neighbor, ³ or have found something lost and lied about it—if you swear falsely regarding any of the various things that one may do and sin thereby— ⁴ when you have sinned and realize your guilt, and would restore what you took by robbery or by fraud or the deposit that was committed to you, or the lost thing that you found, ⁵ or anything else about which you have sworn falsely, you shall repay the principal amount and shall add one-fifth to it. You shall pay it to its owner when you realize your guilt. ⁶ And you shall bring to the priest, as your guilt offering to the LORD, a ram without blemish from the flock, or its equivalent, for a guilt offering.

Numbers 5: 5-7 ⁵ The LORD spoke to Moses, saying: ⁶ Speak to the Israelites: When a man or a woman wrongs another, breaking faith with the LORD, that person incurs guilt ⁷ and shall confess the sin that has been committed. The person shall make full restitution for the wrong, adding one-fifth to it, and giving it to the one who was wronged.

Deuteronomy 15: 12-15 ¹² If a member of your community, whether a Hebrew man or a Hebrew woman, is sold^[a] to you and works for you six years, in the seventh year you shall set

that person free. ¹³ And when you send a male slave^[b] out from you a free person, you shall not send him out empty-handed. ¹⁴ Provide liberally out of your flock, your threshing floor, and your wine press, thus giving to him some of the bounty with which the LORD your God has blessed you. ¹⁵ Remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the LORD your God redeemed you; for this reason I lay this command upon you today.

2 Samuel 12: 4-6 ⁴ Now there came a traveler to the rich man, and he was loath to take one of his own flock or herd to prepare for the wayfarer who had come to him, but he took the poor man's lamb, and prepared that for the guest who had come to him." ⁵ Then David's anger was greatly kindled against the man. He said to Nathan, "As the LORD lives, the man who has done this deserves to die; ⁶ he shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing, and because he had no pity."

Ezra 6: 6-12 ⁶ "Now you, Tattenai, governor of the province Beyond the River, Shethar-bozenai, and you, their associates, the envoys in the province Beyond the River, keep away; ⁷ let the work on this house of God alone; let the governor of the Jews and the elders of the Jews rebuild this house of God on its site. ⁸ Moreover I make a decree regarding what you shall do for these elders of the Jews for the rebuilding of this house of God: the cost is to be paid to these people, in full and without delay, from the royal revenue, the tribute of the province Beyond the River. ⁹ Whatever is needed—young bulls, rams, or sheep for burnt offerings to the God of heaven, wheat, salt, wine, or oil, as the priests in Jerusalem require—let that be given to them day by day without fail, ¹⁰ so that they may offer pleasing sacrifices to the God of heaven, and pray for the life of the king and his children. ¹¹ Furthermore I decree that if anyone alters this edict, a beam shall be pulled out of the house of the perpetrator, who then shall be impaled on it. The house shall be made a dunghill. ¹² May the God who has established his name there overthrow any king or people that shall put forth a hand to alter this, or to destroy this house of God in Jerusalem. I, Darius, make a decree; let it be done with all diligence."

Luke 19: 1-10 He entered Jericho and was passing through it. ² A man was there named Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector and was rich. ³ He was trying to see who Jesus was, but on account of the crowd he could not, because he was short in stature. ⁴ So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore tree to see him, because he was going to pass that way. ⁵ When Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus, hurry and come down; for I must stay at your house today." ⁶ So he hurried down and was happy to welcome him. ⁷ All who saw it began to grumble and said, "He has gone to be the guest of one who is a sinner." ⁸ Zacchaeus stood there and said to the Lord, "Look, half of my possessions, Lord, I will give to the poor; and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I will pay back four times as much." ⁹ Then Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because he too is a son of Abraham. ¹⁰ For the Son of Man came to seek out and to save the lost."

p. God Calls us to Forgive

Matthew 6: 9-15 ⁹“Pray then in this way:

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.

¹⁰ Your kingdom come. Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

¹¹ Give us this day our daily bread.^[a]

¹² And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.

¹³ And do not bring us to the time of trial, but rescue us from the evil one. ¹⁴For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you; ¹⁵but if you do not forgive others, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

Matthew 18:21-35 ²¹Then Peter came and said to him, “Lord, if another member of the church^[a] sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?” ²²Jesus said to him, “Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven^[b] times. ²³“For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. ²⁴When he began the reckoning, one who owed him ten thousand talents^[c] was brought to him; ²⁵and, as he could not pay, his lord ordered him to be sold, together with his wife and children and all his possessions, and payment to be made. ²⁶So the slave fell on his knees before him, saying, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.’ ²⁷And out of pity for him, the lord of that slave released him and forgave him the debt. ²⁸But that same slave, as he went out, came upon one of his fellow slaves who owed him a hundred denarii;^[d] and seizing him by the throat, he said, ‘Pay what you owe.’ ²⁹Then his fellow slave fell down and pleaded with him, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you.’ ³⁰But he refused; then he went and threw him into prison until he would pay the debt. ³¹When his fellow slaves saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their lord all that had taken place. ³²Then his lord summoned him and said to him, ‘You wicked slave! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. ³³Should you not have had mercy on your fellow slave, as I had mercy on you?’ ³⁴And in anger his lord handed him over to be tortured until he would pay his entire debt. ³⁵So my heavenly Father will also do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother or sister^[e] from your heart.”

Luke 11: 1-4 He was praying in a certain place, and after he had finished, one of his disciples said to him, “Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples.” ²He said to them, “When you pray, say:

Father, hallowed be your name.

Your kingdom come.

³ Give us each day our daily bread.^[c]

⁴ And forgive us our sins, for we ourselves forgive everyone indebted to us.

And do not bring us to the time of trial.”^[d]

Luke 17:3-4 ³Be on your guard! If another disciple^[a] sins, you must rebuke the offender, and if there is repentance, you must forgive. ⁴And if the same person sins against you seven times a day, and turns back to you seven times and says, ‘I repent,’ you must forgive.”

Ephesians 4: 31-32 ³¹ Put away from you all bitterness and wrath and anger and wrangling and slander, together with all malice, ³² and be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ has forgiven you.^[a]

James 1: 19-20 ¹⁹ You must understand this, my beloved:^[a] let everyone be quick to listen, slow to speak, slow to anger; ²⁰ for your anger does not produce God's righteousness.

q. God Calls us to Listen

1 Samuel 3:10 Now the LORD came and stood there, calling as before, "Samuel! Samuel!" And Samuel said, "Speak, for your servant is listening."

Psalms 46:10 "Be still, and know that I am God!"

Proverbs 11:14 Where there is no guidance, a nation falls, but in an abundance of counselors, there is safety.

Proverbs 18:13 If one gives answer before hearing, it is folly and shame.

Ecclesiastes 3: 1, 7b For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven . . . a time to keep silence, and a time to speak;

Matthew 11:15 Let anyone with ears listen!

James 1: 19-20. ¹⁹ You must understand this, my beloved:^[a] let everyone be quick to listen, slow to speak, slow to anger; ²⁰ for your anger does not produce God's righteousness.

r. God Calls us to a Ministry of Reconciliation

Matthew 5: 23 – 24 ²³ So when you are offering your gift at the altar, if you remember that your brother or sister^[a] has something against you, ²⁴ leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother or sister,^[b] and then come and offer your gift.

Romans 12: 16 – 21 ¹⁶ Live in harmony with one another; do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly;^[a] do not claim to be wiser than you are. ¹⁷ Do not repay anyone evil for evil, but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all. ¹⁸ If it is possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. ¹⁹ Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave room for the wrath of God;^[b] for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord." ²⁰ No, "if your enemies are hungry, feed them; if they are thirsty, give them something to drink; for by doing this you will heap burning coals on their heads." ²¹ Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

2 Corinthians 5: 17 – 21 ¹⁷ Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come:[a] The old has gone, the new is here! ¹⁸ All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: ¹⁹ that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them. And he has committed to us the

message of reconciliation. 20 We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. 21 God made him who had no sin to be sin[b] for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

Colossians 1:19 – 23 19 For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, 20 and through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross. 21 And you who were once estranged and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, 22 he has now reconciled[j] in his fleshly body[k] through death, so as to present you holy and blameless and irreproachable before him— 23 provided that you continue securely established and steadfast in the faith, without shifting from the hope promised by the gospel that you heard

s. God Invites us not to Fear

Deuteronomy 31:8 It is the LORD who goes before you. He will be with you; he will not fail you or forsake you. Do not fear or be dismayed.”

Joshua 1:9 I hereby command you: Be strong and courageous; do not be frightened or dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.”

Isaiah 41: 9-10 “You are my servant, I have chosen you and not cast you off”;
¹⁰do not fear, for I am with you, do not be afraid, for I am your God;
I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my victorious right hand.

Isaiah 43:1 But now thus says the LORD, he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine.

Jeremiah 1: 7-8 ⁷But the LORD said to me, “Do not say, ‘I am only a boy’; for you shall go to all to whom I send you, and you shall speak whatever I command you. ⁸Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you to deliver you, says the LORD.”

Psalms 23:4 Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I fear no evil; for you are with me, your rod and your staff – they comfort me.

Psalms 27:1 The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The LORD is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?

Psalms 118: 5-6 ⁵Out of my distress I called on the LORD; the LORD answered me and set me in a broad place. ⁶With the LORD on my side I do not fear. What can mortals do to me?

Isaiah 35: 3-4 Strengthen the weak hands and make firm the feeble knees. Say to those who are of a fearful heart, ‘Be strong, do not fear!’ Here is your God . . . He will come and save you.

Matthew 14:26-28 ²⁶ But when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were terrified, saying, “It is a ghost!” And they cried out in fear. ²⁷ But immediately Jesus spoke to them and said, “Take heart, it is I; do not be afraid.”

Luke 1:30 The angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God.

Luke 2:10 But the angel said to them [the shepherds], “Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people:

Luke 5: 9-11 ⁹ For he and all who were with him were amazed at the catch of fish that they had taken; ¹⁰ and so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. Then Jesus said to Simon, “Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching people.” ¹¹ When they had brought their boats to shore, they left everything and followed him.

John 14:27 Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid.

Philippians 4: 4-7, 13 ⁴ Rejoice^[a] in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice.^[b] ⁵ Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. ⁶ Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. ⁷ And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus . . . ¹³ I can do all things through him who strengthens me.

Hebrews 13: 5-7 ⁵ Keep your lives free from the love of money, and be content with what you have; for he has said, “I will never leave you or forsake you.” ⁶ So we can say with confidence, “The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can anyone do to me?”

t. God Calls us to Hope

Jeremiah 29:5-7, 11-14 ⁵ Build houses and live in them; plant gardens and eat what they produce. ⁶ Take wives and have sons and daughters; take wives for your sons, and give your daughters in marriage, that they may bear sons and daughters; multiply there, and do not decrease. ⁷ But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the LORD on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare . . . ¹¹ For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the LORD, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope. ¹² Then when you call upon me and come and pray to me, I will hear you. ¹³ When you search for me, you will find me; if you seek me with all your heart, ¹⁴ I will let you find me, says the LORD, and I will restore your fortunes and gather you from all the nations and all the places where I have driven you, says the LORD, and I will bring you back to the place from which I sent you into exile.

Psalms 62:5 For God alone my soul waits in silence, for my hope is from him.

Lamentations 3:17-24 ¹⁷ my soul is bereft of peace; I have forgotten what happiness is; ¹⁸ so I say, “Gone is my glory, and all that I had hoped for from the LORD.”

¹⁹ The thought of my affliction and my homelessness is wormwood and gall!

²⁰ My soul continually thinks of it and is bowed down within me.

²¹ But this I call to mind and therefore I have hope:

²² The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases, his mercies never come to an end;

²³ they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.

²⁴ "The LORD is my portion," says my soul, "therefore I will hope in him."

Romans 5: 1-5 Therefore, since we are justified by faith, we^[a] have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, ² through whom we have obtained access^[b] to this grace in which we stand; and we^[c] boast in our hope of sharing the glory of God. ³ And not only that, but we^[d] also boast in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, ⁴ and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, ⁵ and hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.

Romans 8: 22-25 ²² We know that the whole creation has been groaning in labor pains until now; ²³ and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly while we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies. ²⁴ For in hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what is seen? ²⁵ But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.

Romans 12:12 Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer.

Romans 15:13 May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Hebrews 6:19-20 We have this hope, a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, a hope that enters the inner shrine behind the curtain, ²⁰ where Jesus, a forerunner on our behalf, has entered, having become a high priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.

Hebrews 10:23 Let us hold fast to the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who has promised is faithful.

Hebrews 11:1 Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.