



## **GROW. PRAY. STUDY.**

The Church of the Resurrection – Weekly Guide

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**July 23, 2017** *Rebels and Roses* “**Saved by Love**”

Scripture:

For the love of Christ urges us on, because we are convinced that one has died for all; therefore all have died. And he died for all, so that those who live might live no longer for themselves, but for him who died and was raised for them. From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view.... So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! *2 Corinthians 5:14-17*

We know that we have passed from death to life because we love one another. Whoever does not love abides in death... We know love by this, that he laid down his life for us—and we ought to lay down our lives for one another. How does God’s love abide in anyone who has the world’s goods and sees a brother or sister in need and yet refuses help? Little children, let us love, not in word or speech, but in truth and action. *1 John 3:14, 16-18*

**Narrator: He fell into despair and lost all hope**

**MONDAY 7.24.17 Mark 4:35-5:9**

In *Beauty and the Beast*, the young prince’s arrogant, cruel choices brought about his accursed existence. Mark didn’t explain what made the man in this story the way he was. He just portrayed a man who lived on “the other side” of the Sea of Galilee (really a lake)—Gentile territory. And the man lived, literally, like a beast—terrifyingly strong, unstable, isolated “among the tombs,” where “he would howl and cut himself with stones.”

- This man lived in an area most Hebrews found alien and frightening—“the other side of the lake” was kind of their equivalent of our “the other side of the tracks.” Landing there, the first person they met was frightening and disturbing. What enabled Jesus not to be afraid of the place or the person? How did Jesus’ calm, confident bearing shape this whole scene, and open possibilities the disciples might have missed for the man’s life to change?
- In his book *Why Do Christians Shoot Their Wounded?*,\* Christian psychologist and physician Dwight Carlson noted that some Christians tragically use a story like this to suggest that anyone with severe mental/emotional illness just lacks faith in God. Jesus did not condemn the man for his condition—he simply healed him. How can activities like Resurrection’s Care Night ([click here](#) for more information) or our [Counseling Referral Ministry](#) make church a safer place for people facing mental and emotional struggles?

**Prayer:** Lord Jesus, when you met a man from whom everyone else wanted to run away, you cared, and you healed. Thank you for being willing to care about and heal the parts of me that frighten even me, too. Amen.

\* For a more in-depth study, see Dwight L. Carlson, *Why Do Christians Shoot Their Wounded?* Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1994.

**Mrs. Potts to Belle: The master's not as terrible as he appears!**

**TUESDAY 7.25.17 Mark 5:10-20**

Belle, the heroine of *Beauty and the Beast*, had to learn to look more deeply than just the Beast's fearsome exterior. Jesus' love and power restored the "completely sane" man who had been there all along under the broken chains and frightening howls. Jesus' ability to see the possibilities in the hurting person created the setting for change, and made space for love to do its healing, restoring work.

- Psychologists have observed that even positive change can make us nervous, and sometimes depressed. As the villagers in *Beauty and the Beast* sing, "We don't like what we don't understand." It makes a sad kind of sense that it bothered the townspeople when they saw the formerly fearsome man dressed and calm. What positive change would you like to see in your life? Are there fears making it hard for you to move toward changing?
- Jesus shared his mission with the restored man, sending him back to his village to "tell them what the Lord has done for you." Before the apostle Paul coined the phrase (cf. [Galatians 2:8](#)), the man was an apostle to the Gentiles. Though place names are hard to pin down, some scholars believe [Mark 6:53-56](#) or [7:31-35](#) may reflect the impact of the man's sharing about Jesus. In what ways is God calling you to share in God's mission?

**Prayer:** Jesus, if I'm comfortable when I shouldn't be, please disturb my life. And give me the courage to work with you to make the positive changes I long to see happen. Amen.

**Belle: He's no monster Gaston. You are!**

**WEDNESDAY 7.26.17 John 3:17-21**

Ironically, in the movie the Beast's ugly exterior concealed a man yearning to be free from his curse, while Gaston's handsome face hid a truly monstrous, hate-filled soul. Jesus' striking words to the Hebrew leader Nicodemus (which followed the famous John 3:16 passage) said that God does not arbitrarily judge human beings. Rather, like Gaston, we condemn ourselves as our choices show that we love darkness more than light.

- What sources (from parents and other childhood teachers to popular films or books) have tended to give you a picture of God as scrutinizing every little thing you do, looking for something wrong to condemn? How can Jesus' description of his life purpose in verse 17 reshape some of those mental images you may carry about how God looks at you? How can it reshape the way you relate to others you think may be on a wrong life course?
- Have you ever known someone who "loved darkness more than the light," who feared having their actions exposed to the light? Have those words ever applied to any part of your inner life? In what ways does verse 21 invite you to remain open to God's light, even when it may alter your wishes or comfort level?

**Prayer:** Lord Jesus, be the light in my life, showing me where I need to grow, and shining out from me to uplift and encourage others. Amen.

## **Mrs. Potts to the Beast: “Must help her to see past all that”**

### **THURSDAY 7.27.17 Acts 26:9-19**

At one point the Beast sadly said, “It’s no use. She’s so beautiful, and I’m...well, look at me!” And Mrs. Potts replied, hopefully, ““Must help her to see past all that.” As the apostle Paul described his spiritual journey to King Agrippa, he painted a similar picture. When he looked at Jesus and his followers, at first he saw only a terrible threat to the faith heritage that he treasured. But then Jesus met him on the road to Damascus, and Paul “saw past all that” to the glory of the Savior. He accepted Jesus’ call on his life, and never looked back.

- Paul seemed to make a full 180 degree turn, from persecuting Christians to planting churches. He began using his Roman name Paul rather than the Hebrew name Saul. But at his core, Paul didn’t actually change. He kept following the God of Israel with all-out zeal the whole time. It was just that now God had showed him the right way to serve! What is most central in shaping your life—your vision or God’s vision?
- Paul was defending himself to the Roman authorities, facing the threat of imprisonment, even death. As a 21<sup>st</sup> century American, you are unlikely to face imprisonment or death for following God’s vision. But that doesn’t mean obeying the heavenly vision is always easy. Sometimes you may need to “see past all that” to grasp the goodness of God’s calling. In what ways has following God’s vision for your life been challenging? Are you willing to obey God’s call on you, no matter what?

**Prayer:** Almighty God, thank you that you have a heavenly vision for my life, and for the world around me. Help me to have the faith and courage to obey that vision. Amen.

## **Lumiere: What if she is ‘the one’ who will break the spell?**

### **FRIDAY 7.28.17 2 Corinthians 5:14-20**

When Belle came to the castle, the servants (cursed to be a candlestick, mantle clock and teapot) could only wonder if she might be “the one” who would break the spell. After meeting Jesus, the apostle Paul had no doubt Jesus was “the one” who could set the human family free from our self-imposed alienation from God. The good news, he said, is that God loves us, has always wanted to reconcile us, and acted in Christ to bring that about. As we become a “new creation” in Christ, God makes it our mission to invite others to “be reconciled to God.”

- Most Roman, Greek and Canaanite religions offered gifts and sacrifices to try to reconcile their angry, displeased god or gods to them. But Paul said that was backward. We were the alienated ones. God came in Jesus to draw us back into the circle of heaven’s love. Are you reconciled with God? Are you open for God to work through you to reconcile others—sharing the good news of freedom in Christ?
- What historical event or person seems to you to present the most vivid picture of God’s reconciling work in the world? In what ways did God work through that person or event to bring about reconciliation and wholeness? In your own life, when have you seen anger and pain changed for the better as reconciliation takes place?

**Prayer:** Lord Jesus, thanks to you I experience more restored harmony in my life and relationships. Help me share your message of reconciliation with a friend, neighbor, or loved one today. Amen.

**Beast: You came back. Belle: Don't leave me. I love you.**

**SATURDAY 7.29.17 Romans 12:1-3, 9-21**

In *Beauty and the Beast*, the Beast demonstrated love for Belle first by letting her go from the castle to rescue her father. Then Belle expressed her love for the Beast in the nick of time, and all ended well. The apostle Paul had never been to Rome when he wrote this letter. But many of his friends had (cf. [Romans 16](#)), and he knew that Christians there, as in every other church he worked with, faced many real-life tensions and challenges. He offered powerful, practical wisdom to guide, not only the Roman Christians but Christ-followers through the centuries, in how to transform from “beasts” to people of love, living lives that can defeat evil with good.

- We sometimes live a sort of “news magazine” life: we treat “Religion” as a section of life separate from “Business,” “Entertainment,” and the like. How would the transforming of your mind Paul envisioned affect business dealings? Political behavior? Activities like sports or movie-going? Paul wrote in verse 9, “Love should be shown without pretending.” Have you ever been in a setting (maybe even a church) where everyone pretended to love one another, while whispered conversations were full of criticism and backbiting? What makes honest love (which includes dealing honestly with issues that arise) so vital to spiritual health and transformation?

**Prayer:** Lord Jesus, I want my life to count for good, to make this world a better place. Plant the principles Paul taught in my heart. Help me not just read them but enthusiastically live them every day. Amen.

**Family Activity:** God designed the world to change. Think of the four seasons: bulbs bursting forth as flowers, tadpoles turning to frogs, rain and snow falling, caterpillars becoming butterflies and temperatures shooting upward and downward almost daily. God designed people to change, too, and Jesus can change our lives anytime, anywhere. Read [2 Corinthians 5:17](#). As a family, discuss how Jesus makes a difference in your individual lives. Are you more loving, forgiving and kind? Are you more patient and gentle? Identify some ways you need to grow and change. How can you grow to become more like Jesus? Create a family mural by drawing “before and after” pictures of changes in yourselves, your family and the world God created. Celebrate and give thanks for the change Jesus makes in your lives and in the world!

**Prayer Requests** – [cor.org/prayer](http://cor.org/prayer)

*Prayers for Peace & Comfort for:*

- J.R. Smith and family on the death of his wife Carol Smith, 7/18
- Joan Stultz and family on the death of her husband Bill Stultz, 7/17
- Friends and family of Teresa Copling on her death, 7/1
- Carol Lovett and family on the death of her mother Faith DeBonis, 6/28
- Kate Tilden and family on the death of her father John Peterson, 6/8
- Melody Pedersen and family on the death of her son Dean “Skip” Ellingsen, 4/21