

*Christ With Us:
A Daily Devotional
Inspired by The
Breastplate of St. Patrick*



Ian Collier & Jenny Smith

Introduction

This Daily Devotional is designed as a companion resource for an 8-week sermon series based on St. Patrick's Breastplate. Each week, a verse of St. Patrick's Breastplate forms the focus for that week's celebration of holy worship. We invite you to begin each day's devotion by praying the verse for the week and the chorus.

The premise for this devotional is that each week, participants in this program will hear the main scripture for the week proclaimed on Sunday morning through the scripture reading and the sermon. They will then return to this text later in the day on Sunday as they read it for themselves and engage with the **Thoughts for the Day**, which are focus questions. Each day of the week, there is a reading or an exercise to build on the week's focus.

This devotional may also be used with **Christ With Us: Small Group Leader's Guide**, which provides some sample lesson plans and additional comprehension and discussion questions to help guide conversation in a small group setting.

It is my prayer that through this resource you will grow closer to Christ.

Ian Collier
Feast of Saint Mary the Virgin, 2020

The Breastplate of Saint Patrick

Week 1

I bind unto myself the Name,
The strong Name of the Trinity;
By invocation of the same.
The Three in One, and One in Three,
Of Whom all nature hath creation,
Eternal Father, Spirit, Word:
Praise to the Lord of my salvation,
Salvation is of Christ the Lord

Week 2

I bind unto myself today
The virtues of the starlit heaven,
The glorious sun's life-giving ray,
The whiteness of the moon at even,
The flashing of the lightning free,
The whirling wind's tempestuous shocks,
The stable earth, the deep salt sea,
Around the old eternal rocks.

Week 3

I bind unto myself today
The power of God to hold and lead,
His eye to watch, His might to stay,

Week 4

His ear to hearken to my need.
The wisdom of my God to teach,
His hand to guide, His shield to ward,
The word of God to give me speech,
His heavenly host to be my guard.

Week 5

I bind this day to me for ever.
By power of faith, Christ's incarnation;
His baptism in the Jordan river;
His death on Cross for my salvation;
His bursting from the spicèd tomb;
His riding up the heavenly way;
His coming at the day of doom;
I bind unto myself today.

Week 6

Against the demon snares of sin,
The vice that gives temptation force,
The natural lusts that war within,
The hostile men that mar my course;
Or few or many, far or nigh,
In every place and in all hours,
Against their fierce hostility,
I bind to me these holy powers

Week 7

Against all Satan's spells and wiles,
Against false words of heresy,
Against the knowledge that defiles,
Against the heart's idolatry,
Against the wizard's evil craft,
Against the death wound and the burning,
The choking wave and the poisoned shaft,
Protect me, Christ, till Thy returning

Week 8

I bind unto myself the power
Of the great love of the cherubim;
The sweet 'well done' in judgment hour,
The service of the seraphim,
Confessors' faith, Apostles' word,
The Patriarchs' prayers, the Prophets' scrolls,
All good deeds done unto the Lord,
And purity of virgin souls.

[Chorus]

Christ be with me, Christ within me,
Christ beneath me, Christ above me,
Christ behind me, Christ before me,
Christ to comfort and restore me.
Christ on my right, Christ on my left,
Christ in quiet, Christ in danger,
Christ in every eye that sees me,
Christ in every ear that hears me,
Christ in hearts of all that love me,
Christ in mouth of friend and stranger.

Week 1- Bound to the Fullness of God

Sunday - Key Scripture

[Ephesians 6:10-20](#)

Thoughts for the Day: An election. A global pandemic. Societal dysfunction. Ongoing oppression and structural sin. Life seems out of control. This year seems to be trying to set a record for the number of flaming arrows that can be shot towards us at the same time. But God tells us that we have a full spiritual armor available to us that can be used to defend ourselves against the true enemy - not things of flesh and blood, but the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. *What are those things you feel Satan is using to assault you? Where do you feel your spirit attacked?*

Monday - Key Scripture

[Romans 13:11-14](#)

Thoughts for the Day: Sometimes we think of God's protection as a passive benefit of our faith. We pray that *God* does something so that *we* don't have to. But Truth, Righteousness, Proclaiming the Gospel, and Faith - all these are active ways that we live out our Christian life. In Romans, Paul gets more specific on how we live while dressed in God's armor. *How does Paul instruct us to use the armor of God? In what ways do we fight back against the spiritual forces of evil?*

Tuesday - Key Scripture

[Luke 22:35-38](#) & [Matthew 26:51-52](#)

Thoughts for the Day: Paul was not alone in comparing the struggle against the spiritual forces of evil with earthly battles. Christ makes a similar connection just before his arrest, but the disciples misunderstand it. Even though Paul is clear in this week's main scripture that our enemies are not those of flesh and blood, sometimes we still get confused and wield our faith against other people instead of trusting God to protect us against spiritual assaults. *What are the ways people do harm in the name of God? Are you spiritually mature enough to always leave your weapons holstered, no matter what?*

Wednesday - Return

Return to Ephesians 6:10-20. Read the scripture out loud and sit quietly for 10 minutes to listen to what God might be whispering to your soul this week.

Thursday - Go Deeper

[Matthew 28:16-20](#)

Thoughts for the Day: In Christianity, all baptisms are performed in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit in obedience to Christ's command. In this way, the person being baptized is born again to a new life - a life where they are bound to the name of the triune God. This is God's promise to us to always be with us as our armor and our shield. Have you been baptized? If so, then you have already been bound to the strong name of the Trinity. *Pray St. Patrick's Breastplate as a re-affirmation of what God has already done for you. If you haven't been baptized, are you ready to accept what God is offering you? What is holding you back?*

Friday - Go Deeper

[Isaiah 59:14-20](#)

Thoughts for the Day: To be bound to God is to be protected from the assaults of the evil one, but we are also, ourselves, held to a high standard. The armor of God has been used by God before - namely to pour out wrath on the Chosen People when they did not free their prisoners, share their bread with the hungry, house the homeless, or clothe the naked (Isa 58:6-8). There is no neutral ground where we are safe from the assault of Satan and at the same time not obligated to live as citizens of God's Kingdom in which we have the duty to care for everyone. *Have you done your duty as a citizen of God's kingdom?*

Saturday - Sabbath

Week 2 – Old Eternal Rock

Sunday – Key Scripture

[Genesis 1:1 – Genesis 2:3](#)

Thoughts for the Day: There is always something comforting about familiar things when the rest of life seems upended and chaotic. For some people, this means returning to ritual or tradition; for others, it is about relying on the rhythms that they can count on - the seasons, the holiday cycle, the harvest. We crave stability. This week we are thinking about how in God we find that old eternal rock which is the foundation of the regularity of the natural world. This is why creation is good - because it is all created by, and founded upon, God! *Where do you see God in God's creation?*

Monday – Key Scripture

[Genesis 2:4-25](#)

Thoughts for the Day: According to this second creation story, God makes the animals of the earth as potential companions for the human. *If we think of the way we are called to treat other human beings, are we treating the earth's animals - who were our original community - with the proper dignity? Even though we experience perfect community only with other humans, how would your life need to change if you saw every creature as a partner?*

Tuesday - Key Scripture

[Genesis 3:1-24](#)

Thoughts for the Day: After the man and woman disobeyed God, the whole earth is cursed as a result. Humanity was placed in the world to be the stewards with God, so when we sinned, our disconnection from God broke the connection with everything under our care, too. We can still see God's handiwork in creation, but now everything is a little warped, more violent, and scarier. *When in your life has a decision produced far reaching consequences that you didn't consider? Have you ever been hurt by an unintended consequence of someone else's action?*

Wednesday - Return

Return to Genesis 1:1 – Genesis 2:3. Read the scripture out loud and sit quietly for 10 minutes to listen to what God might be whispering to your soul this week.

Thursday - Go Deeper

[Job 38:1-11, 25-38](#)

Thoughts for the Day: In his prayer, St. Patrick binds himself to the stable aspects of God's good creation – the earth, the sea, the sun, and the moon. He also speaks of things that are very unstable - the flashes of free lightning and whirling tempests of winds. Even though God gave order to the seas of chaos, we see here in the Book of Job that God created the chaos, too, as it burst forth from the womb of the Father! In its place, even chaos can be a good creation. *When has God used disruption to help you grow spiritually? If you are experiencing chaos now, where do you feel God trying to re-order your life?*

Friday - Go Deeper

[Hymn: This Is My Father's World](#)

Thoughts for the Day: Look up the lyrics to the hymn, *This Is My Father's World* (UMH 144). In this hymn the author talks about seeing God shining through nature and trusting that God is the final ruler of the world. *What would it be like to sing this hymn after every prayer we prayed? Does this comfort you? What questions does this hymn raise for you?*

Saturday - Sabbath

Week 3 – God to Hold and Lead

Sunday – Key Scripture

[Genesis 12:1-9; 15:1-6](#)

Thoughts for the Day: The word "Covenant" is one of those religious terms that the secular world doesn't use much. The world usually thinks in 'contracts' - a limited agreement between two parties to render a set service for a set payment in a set period of time.

Contracts deal with the actions of two persons.

Covenants, on the other hand, define a relationship involving the whole person. Covenants are ongoing promises that never expire and set the relationship between two persons. God makes a covenant with Abram to restore the relationship that humans had broken. *What are the relationships in your life that are defined by contracts? What are the relationships defined by covenants? What does it mean to you that Baptism is a kind of covenant?*

Monday – Key Scripture

[Genesis 17:15-18; 18:1-15; 21:1-7](#)

Thoughts for the Day: Both Abraham and Sarah laugh in God's face when they are told, in their old age, that Sarah would conceive and bear a son - God's promise to them was impossible! We are all so accustomed to thinking practically and prudentially according to the world's logic that sometimes we forget that what God can do is not limited by our fallen world. *Put yourself in the place of Abraham & Sarah - what would you have thought if God had said to you that you would have a child at 90 years old? What do you think went through their minds when God's promise was fulfilled? When has God provided for you in ways that surprised you?*

Tuesday - Key Scripture

[Genesis 21:10-15](#)

Thoughts for the Day: Certain definitions of "faith" put a lot of stress on its trust in things "unseen." But Isaac's son, Jacob, has a vision where he sees God's angels travelling between Heaven and Earth. He is blessed by knowing that God is not a distant watchmaker, but is actively involved in the affairs of the Earth. God then says, "I will not leave you until I have done everything I have promised you." *Why do you think it was important that Jacob, the father of the twelve tribes of Israel, saw that God was at work in the world? Where do you see God at work in our world?*

Wednesday - Return

Return to Genesis 12:1-9; 15:1-6. Read the scripture out loud and sit quietly for 10 minutes to listen to what God might be whispering to your soul this week.

Thursday - Go Deeper

[Genesis 32:22-32](#)

Thoughts for the Day: As he prepares to meet the brother who he had wronged, Jacob finds himself wrestling with God. As a result, Jacob is renamed Israel - "He who struggles with God." The Patriarchs of our faith - Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob/Israel - have their stories marked by trusting God, laughing at God, and wrestling with God. *As God guides the Church toward its future, how do these actions pop up in our life? Which ones do you experience the most?*

Friday - Go Deeper

[Hymn: Come, O Thou Traveler Unknown](#)

Thoughts for the Day: Look up the lyrics to the hymn, *Come, O Thou Traveler Unknown* (UMH 386). Here, Charles Wesley re-imagines Jacob's struggle with the divine being as his own struggle with God over his own sin and despair. At the end of the hymn, Wesley is able to accept God's love and mercy. *Have you ever struggled over whether God would forgive one of your actions? What does it mean to you that God's very nature is Love and God's mercy is over all things?*

Saturday - Sabbath

Week 4 – God Who Hears

Sunday – Key Scripture

[Exodus 3:1-12; 15:1-18](#)

Thoughts for the Day: God chooses Moses - someone with a speech impediment - to proclaim God's decrees in front of Pharaoh. God sees the misery of the Israelites in Egypt, tells Moses that God has come down to deliver them, and then says, "So now, go. I am sending you!" Moses was an unlikely figure to be called to address the liberation of his people, but God chose to work through him anyway. *Where do you see the need for someone to speak words of liberation in the world today? Where is God trying to work through you to respond to another's cry?*

Monday – Key Scripture

[Luke 10:25-37 & James 2:14-17](#)

Thoughts for the Day: Something makes me think that if God had appeared to Moses and said, "I have heard the cries of my people in Egypt, and they will certainly be in my thoughts; good luck," Moses would not have been very happy. Jesus and his brother James remind us that loving our neighbor means praying for them *and* making sure they are taken care of. *How do you care for your neighbors? If someone were to look at your budget and how you spend your time, could they tell that caring for others is a priority for you?*

Tuesday - Key Scripture

[Psalm 105:24-45](#)

Thoughts for the Day: The story of the Exodus defines the identity of the Israelite people. Each year, during the celebration of Passover, the story was told over again. It was even written into songs that themselves became scripture - like the Psalm we read today. *What is it about this story that is so compelling that it demands to be told over and over again? Why is it important to be reminded that our God is the God of the Exodus? If you were to write a song telling of God's work in your life, what would you include in the lyrics?*

Wednesday - Return

Return to Exodus 3:1-12. Read the scripture out loud and sit quietly for 10 minutes to listen to what God might be whispering to your soul this week.

Thursday - Go Deeper

[Deuteronomy 24:17-22 & Luke 1:46-55](#)

Thoughts for the Day: John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, emphasized that God's grace covered all people even before we are aware of it, and that God's mercy is over all God's works (Psalm 145:9). God **loves** everyone. But as we are reminded today, God shows special concern for certain kinds of people. *Who are the people that today's scriptures indicate are favored by God? Who are those with whom God shows displeasure?*

Friday - Go Deeper

[1908 Methodist Social Creed](#)

Thoughts of the Day: Look up the 1908 Social Creed of the Methodist Episcopal Church. This was one way that Methodists worked to help their neighbors when they heard the cries of those abused by factories.

Many of the progressive labor laws (like the abolition of child labor, and having a day off) were the result of pressure from churches. *Think about the world today and Mary's song in Luke 1:46-55 - if you could write a social creed based on the cries from your neighbors today, what would it say?*

Saturday - Sabbath

Week 5 – Bound to Grace and Truth

Sunday – Key Scripture

[John 1:1-18; 14:5-7](#)

Thoughts for the Day: According to John, Christians should not have anxiety about reaching God the Father because we already know the way to God through Jesus. In fact, John writes that any person who has ever reached God has done so through Jesus! *What is it about Jesus that makes him able to be "the way" to the Father? Based on John 1, how would you explain who Jesus is to a newcomer to the faith?*

Monday – Key Scripture

[Matthew 3:1-17; Galatians 3:23-29](#)

Thoughts for the Day: When other people were baptized by John the Baptizer, their sins were forgiven. But the sinless Jesus was baptized, too. *What happened when Jesus was baptized? What does it mean to you that we are not baptized with John's baptism only, but baptized with Jesus' baptism?*

Tuesday – Key Scripture

[1 Corinthians 15:3-6, 12-28](#)

Thoughts for the Day: When Christians talk about salvation you will often hear things about "going to heaven" and being "forgiven from our sins." These are certainly a part of salvation, but are fairly minor within the big picture. In fact, Paul says that if we just "go to heaven" and are not physically resurrected, then we shouldn't believe Christ was raised and Christianity is all a lie! *What is the metaphor Paul uses to relate Christ's resurrection to our resurrection? What does Paul say is the final enemy that we are saved from?*

Wednesday - Return

Return to John 1:1-18; 14:5-7. Read the scripture out loud and sit quietly for 10 minutes to listen to what God might be whispering to your soul this week.

Thursday - Go Deeper

[Revelation 19:11-21](#)

Thoughts for the Day: Each time we celebrate communion, we say together, "Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again." How often do you think about Christ's return in glory? Today's scripture describes a great battle between Jesus and those who are loyal to the devil. *Who does John write is on the side of the devil? What difference does it make for your life today that a day of judgment is coming?*

Friday - Go Deeper

[Nicene Creed](#)

Thoughts for the Day: Look up the text of the Nicene Creed. This creed historically forms the widest way to define Christian faith. You will notice that it doesn't say anything about a theory of atonement, or a way to organize a church, or how to worship. Instead, it focuses on who God is and what God has done in the world. *In the parts that talk about Jesus, what words or phrases jump out to you? What confuses you? Why do you think the Church requires belief in each part of this creed's statement about Jesus for someone to be a Christian?*

Saturday - Sabbath

Week 6 - Demon Snares of Sin

Sunday - Key Scripture

[Psalm 5 & Psalm 51](#)

Thoughts for the Day: Sin is more than just breaking a commandment. Sin is the twisting or rejection of something good that God has created. On the one hand, this means that until God fills everything with God's infinite goodness, Sin remains a danger. On the other hand, because Sin is a rejection of God (who is Life), those who are under Sin's control end up spiritually dying as a result. King David knew both the danger and corruption of Sin, and his understanding changed over time. *What does David ask for in Psalm 5? How is this different from his later prayer in Psalm 51? How do you pray to God about your Sin?*

Monday - Key Scripture

[1 Samuel 17:32-51](#)

Thoughts for the Day: When David is just a boy he does battle with Goliath - a gigantic warrior of the Philistine people. Saul tries to dress up David like a soldier, but David refuses. *What does David rely on for protection? Why is David able to be successful?*

Tuesday - Key Scripture

[2 Samuel 11:1-27](#)

Thoughts for the Day: When David is young and the big dangers in his life are people attacking him, he is able to trust in God faithfully. But when he becomes King, gains power, and is secure from his enemies, David faces another danger - himself! *What is it that threatens David in today's scripture? How is his response different than what he did when facing Goliath?*

Wednesday - Key Scripture

[2 Samuel 12:1-15](#)

Thoughts for the Day: Lack of perspective is one of the most tragic consequences of human sin. When Samuel tells David a story about a rich man taking a poor man's sheep, David responds with fury against the rich man's sin. David is able to recognize wrongs committed by others, but is not sorry for murdering Uriah and committing adultery with Bathsheba until Samuel confronts him! *Why do you think it is easier to identify another person's sin than our own? Do you have people in your life who you trust to call you out when you sin?*

Thursday - Return

Return to Psalm 5 & Psalm 51. Read the scripture out loud and sit quietly for 10 minutes to listen to what God might be whispering to your soul this week.

Friday - Go Deeper

[A Service of Word and Table I](#)

Thoughts for the Day: Search online for "A Service of Word and Table I" from UMC Discipleship Ministries. Scroll down until you see the section called CONFESSIOIN AND PARDON (Or, look in a United Methodist Hymnal). *What are the things that we confess that we have *done* that we shouldn't have? What are the things that we confess that we *haven't* done that we should have? According to the words of pardon that the pastor says, why should we believe that God is willing to forgive us?*

Saturday - Sabbath

Week 7 – False Words of Heresy

Sunday – Key Scripture

[Isaiah 28:14-20](#)

Thoughts for the Day: Many Christian doctrines are impossible to wrap our minds around - like that God is three and also one, or that Christ is both fully God and fully human. Heresies (putting God in one of our boxes, rather than believing what God says about God), can seem convenient in the short term, but end up undermining our faith and leave us with a gospel in which we can't trust that we are saved at all! When we make God into something that we want, rather than who God says God is, it's also called idolatry. *Have you ever made something in your life into an idol? Why do we want to make other things into our gods?*

Monday – Key Scripture

[2 Peter 1:3-4](#)

Thoughts for the Day: We call Jesus our savior. A couple weeks ago we thought about how we are saved *from* death itself. But have you ever asked yourself what we are saved *for*? What is on the other side of the Resurrection? Peter says that salvation is ultimately sharing in the Divine Nature itself! *What is God's nature (what makes God who God is)? If God is sharing God's own nature with us, what sorts of things do you imagine that entails? How will we become after we are resurrected?*

Tuesday - Key Scripture

[Colossians 1:15-23](#)

Thoughts for the Day: Every person, at some time in their life, asks the question, "What am I here for? What's my purpose?" Of course, all of us have different gifts and usually find our immediate purpose in what we are able to do to make a difference in the world. But Paul writes that all things have been created through Christ and for Christ. The purpose of all creation is to be in relationship with Jesus. God created you to have a relationship with you. *How do you understand your purpose now? If you made a relationship with Jesus your own personal top priority, how would your life change?*

Wednesday - Return

Return to Isaiah 28:14-20. Read the scripture out loud and sit quietly for 10 minutes to listen to what God might be whispering to your soul this week.

Thursday - Go Deeper

[Proverbs 8:22-36](#)

Thoughts for the Day: In this passage we are told that Wisdom was created/established/birthing (it's the same word for what Eve did to Cain in Genesis 4:1) by God before time itself began. The early church read this passage as describing Jesus before he was incarnate as a human being. We are told that Wisdom/Jesus delighted in the human race - that means you! *Today, remember that God smiles because you exist.*

Friday - Go Deeper

[Hymn: And Can It Be that I Should Gain](#)

Thoughts for the Day: Look up the lyrics to the hymn, *And Can It Be that I Should Gain* (UMH 363). Charles Wesley couldn't wrap his mind around who God is or how God works, but instead of trying to make God less than what scripture confesses God is (heresy), Charles feels awe and wonder that God is more than he ever could have thought! In his words, God is "Amazing Love" and "Mystery all." If we are worshipping the true God, and not a false version who only lives in our heads, awe and wonder should probably be our emotional reaction, too. *What do you feel during worship? Have you ever considered that God is so far beyond our understanding, but still wants a relationship with you, specifically?*

Saturday - Sabbath

Week 8 – Bound to the Resurrected Lord

Sunday – Key Scripture

[Revelation 20:11 – Revelation 21:7 & 1 Corinthians 15:50-58](#)

Thoughts for the Day: Everyone says they hate spoilers, and yet we watch movies over and over again and still enjoy them, even when we know what is going to happen. In fact, sometimes we can better appreciate the story because we know where it is going. The world today is in uncertain times, and this year has brought a lot of hurt and a lot of death with it. On this All Saints' Day, we remember that even in the midst of this darkness, we know how the story ends. The dead are raised & death, mourning, crying, and pain will be no more. *How does this promise change the way we can look at what is happening right now?*

Monday – Key Scripture

[Psalm 103:1-18](#)

Thoughts for the Day: Death has become almost taboo in American culture. We pretend it doesn't exist until it comes for someone close to us, and by then we are so unprepared we can only greet it with horror and grief. David understood that humans are but dust, and our lives are as fleeting as flowers in a field. But just as we cannot escape death, we are likewise unable to escape God's love and promises. Yes, we will die; and even then, God's love will not let us perish. *When was the last time you had a conversation with your loved ones about death? Are you prepared to confront death (your own, or someone else's) as an occasion to praise God?*

Tuesday - Key Scripture

[1 Peter 3:18-22](#)

Thoughts for the Day: There are times when this world feels like hell - when we can't feel God's presence, when we feel abandoned, when we feel no hope. And yet, one of the most amazing Christian truths is that even in the midst of Hell, Christ is there with us. Peter tells us that after Christ was crucified, he even went to preach the Gospel to those spirits locked in Hell's prison! So, if this season feels like Hell for you, remember that Christ has been there, has broken people out before, and will do it again! *What hells are you locked in right now? Take a minute and pray for Christ to break you out.*

Wednesday - Return

Return to Revelation 20:11 - Revelation 21:7. Read the scripture out loud and sit quietly for 10 minutes to listen to what God might be whispering to your soul this week.

Thursday - Go Deeper

[Matthew 25:14-30](#)

Thoughts for the Day: Saint Patrick's prayer binds to us "the sweet 'well done' in judgment hour." Looking now at the parable where this phrase occurs, what is Patrick praying for help doing? *Under what conditions is a "well done" given by God? Does your life reflect the lives of the "good & trustworthy" servants? What is standing in your way?*

Friday - Go Deeper

[Hymn: For All The Saints](#)

Thoughts for the Day: Look up the lyrics to the hymn *For All the Saints* (UMH 711). The one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church has two parts: the church militant (those on Earth, struggling to overcome sin and seeking to love God), and the church triumphant (those in heaven, resting in perfection). The life of the church triumphant is one of perpetual worship, so when we gather to praise God, we join worship in progress already and are surrounded with the saints of the past. *What does it mean to you to be "one" with all the Christians who have come before you? In your spiritual life, how do the saints show up?*

Saturday - Sabbath

Our Daily Prayer

Christ be with me, Christ within me,
Christ beneath me, Christ above me,
Christ behind me, Christ before me,
Christ to comfort and restore me.
Christ on my right, Christ on my left,
Christ in quiet, Christ in danger,
Christ in every eye that sees me,
Christ in every ear that hears me,
Christ in hearts of all that love me,
Christ in mouth of friend and stranger.