

Building Faith

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Oh, The Places You'll Go: Inspiration & Prayers for Summer Travels

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“Sometimes we forget that all those wonderful stories in the Bible of healings, teachings, miracles, and deliverance take place against the backdrop of many of our favorite summer destinations: mountains, lakes, beaches, plains, rivers, and more.”

Finding God on Vacation

Summer is a time for many to step out of day-to-day routines and renew and recharge. For some, a change of scenery can bring a much-needed change in perspective. Whether it is the rhythm of waves crashing at the beach or shelter in the shadow of a mountain— geographic location can play a unique role in renewing our souls.

Geography in the Bible

Geography plays an important role in the Bible too. Sometimes we forget that all those stories of healings, teachings, and miracles take place against the backdrop of mountains, lakes, beaches, plains, rivers, and more. When we remember that God is present in these places, we become aware that the same healing, grace, and peace people experienced in the Bible are available to us as well. Geography can serve as that reminder. As the great naturalist John Muir once wrote, “When we try to pick out anything by itself, we find it hitched to everything else in the universe.”

Inspiration & Prayers For Summer Travel Locations

Below follows a list of popular summertime locations along with a scripture verse, quote, and prayer that you might use individually or with your family or friends for your devotions this summer. God bless you wherever your journeys lead.

Beach

“Just after daybreak, Jesus stood on the beach; but the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to them, “Children, you have no fish, have you?” They answered him, “No.” He said to them, “Cast the net to the right side of the boat, and you will find some.” So they cast it, and now they were not able to haul it in because there were so many fish. That disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, “It is the Lord!”

– John 21:4-9

“Patience, patience, patience is what the sea teaches. Patience and faith. One should lie empty, open, choiceless as a beach—waiting for a gift from the sea.”

– Anne Lindberg Morrow, [A Gift from the Sea](#)

O God of the waves, in this liminal place where the land yields to the sea, we pray that we too would yield to the rhythms of your creation. As the swells rise, the waves crash, and the waters recede, may we find our rhythm of life restored and renewed in you. May this place of rest and playfulness recenter our hearts on your joy and peace through the One who stilled the storm and walked on the water, Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.

Mountains

“After Jesus had left that place, he passed along the Sea of Galilee, and he went up the mountain, where he sat down. Great crowds came to him, bringing with them the lame, the maimed, the blind, the mute, and many others. They put them at his feet, and he cured them, so that the crowd was amazed when they saw the mute speaking, the maimed whole, the lame walking, and the blind seeing. And they praised the God of Israel.”

– Matthew 15:29-31

“The call of wilderness is very familiar to me. In one way or another, it is probably always calling. Sometimes I have felt it inwardly as an old, familiar longing, a passion unfulfilled—what Thoreau called a ‘yearning for the Wild’ that no language could ever express. At its most powerful, however, the call seemed to have come from outside me, from some wild place and Presence—a true ‘call of the wild.’ The image that comes to me is of a mountain forest opening invisible arms to me, inviting me to enter into its secret places so deeply and completely that I finally disappear—and there, in soft, rich lostness, I will be healed; my own true nature will be restored.”

– Gerald May, [The Wisdom of Wilderness: Experiencing the Healing Power of Nature](#)

O God of crags, cliffs, and trails, just as the prophet Elijah once sought your shelter and protection in the mountain, so we seek your protection and blessing in our lives. As Elijah discovered your voice in the sound of sheer silence, may we hear you speaking afresh to us in the rustle of the leaves, the sound of our footsteps, and the calls of your creatures, both great and small. Let us rest and be renewed, and, dare we ask, be transfigured by this time on the mountain, that we may be renewed for the ministry to which you have called us. Amen.

River

“And when Jesus had been baptized, just as he came up from the water , suddenly the heavens were opened to him and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. And a voice from heaven said, “This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased.”

– Matthew 3:16-17

“I don’t know who God is exactly.

But I’ll tell you this.

I was sitting in the river named Clarion, on a

water splashed stone

and all afternoon I listened to the voices

of the river talking.

Whenever the water struck the stone it had

something to say,

and the water itself, and even the mosses trailing

under the water.

And slowly, very slowly, it became clear to me

what they were saying.

Said the river: I am part of holiness.

And I too, said the stone. And I too, whispered

the moss beneath the water.”

– Mary Oliver from “At the River Clarion” in [Red Bird](#)

O God, in this place where you declared your Son the beloved one, may we know our belovedness and infinite worth to you. May the river wash away and carry far downstream our sin, our pain, our regrets...and fill us with renewed hope in the persistence of the goodness in us and in your world. As your people crossed the river into the promised land, may we cross over from death to life, from despair to hope, from darkness into your marvelous light. Baptize us again with your presence and love. Amen.

Lake

“Once while Jesus was standing beside the lake of Gennesaret, and the crowd was pressing in on to hear the word of God, he saw two boats there at the shore of the lake; the fishermen had gone out of them and were washing their nets. He got into one of the boats, the one

belonging to Simon, and asked him to put out a little way from the shore. Then he sat down and taught the crowds from the boat.”

– Luke 5:1-3

“When despair for the world grows in me
And I wake in the night at the least sound
In fear of what my life and my children’s lives may be,
I go and lie down where the wood drake
Rests in his beauty on the water, and the great heron feeds,
I come into the peace of wild things
Who do not tax their lives with forethought
Of grief. I come into the presence of still water,
And I feel above me the day-blind stars
Waiting with their light. For a time
I rest in the grace of the world, and am free.”

– Wendell Berry, “Peace of the Wild Things” in [The Selected Poems of Wendell Berry](#)

O God of the lakeshore, may we rest in the peace of the wild things. When the surface of the lake is calm and still, may we experience that equanimity deep within. When the lake is stirred by the wind, may it remind us of the winds of Pentecost and how your Holy Spirit blows through us and into the world you love. As we see the turtle, the loon, the heron, the perch, each with their particular place and role in this eco-system, may we rediscover our place in your creation and in your mission to love and care for the world. Amen.