

THEME OF THE WEEK: **Believing Humility**

Jesus is the Savior of Sinners. We think that sin is the problem, and it is. But more important is how we consider our sin. If we love our sin, or if we don't even recognize our sin, we are in a dangerous place. Jesus tells the parable of the Pharisee standing in the front of the synagogue, boasting of his righteousness. He was far from the kingdom of God. The sinful tax collector, on the other hand, was beating his chest and begged for mercy. The sinner, the one who knew his sin and lamented it, this one went home righteous. The Lord's Law works in us the knowledge of our sinful condition, and by the Gospel Jesus forgives that sin, our sin, forever.

SUN

SCRIPTURE: **Luke 18:9-14 Guilty and Acquitted**

In God's holy courtroom there is no arguing your own righteousness. We try. We think that we are pretty good people, better than most. We minimize our sin and maximize our good works, but God sees through our disguises. We are sinners, guilty, deserving condemnation, case closed. But God so loved the world that He sent His Son to suffer for our sin and guilt, and by the gift of the cross of Jesus, all our sins are forgiven. All of them. The Lord exalts the humble, the repentant. You are guilty, but by the mercy of God you are acquitted, innocent, declared righteous. You are justified. *Lord Jesus, show me Your mercy, forgive all my sins, cover me with Your righteousness, and bring me with joy before Your righteous throne. Amen.*

MON

SCRIPTURE: **Ps 119, eleventh part (KAPH v81-88) When?**

The Christian life is a life of waiting, longing, hoping for the Lord's promised deliverance. We walk through this veil of tears, begging for the Lord's deliverance. How long, O Lord? When? "When will You comfort me?" (v. 82). "When will You execute judgment on those who persecute me?" (v. 84). While we wait we pray, and we cling to the promises God has given. We remember His Word. The Lord will receive us according to His lovingkindness. The death and resurrection of Jesus assures us that the Lord is faithful, and our waiting will soon be over. *O Lord, revive me according to Your lovingkindness, so that I may keep the testimony of Your mouth. Amen.*

TUE

SCRIPTURE: **1 Corinthians 15:1-10 Life Passed On**

"What I received, that I delivered" (15:3). Paul didn't add anything to it. He didn't take anything away. He took the life-giving death-destroying sin-forgiving good news of Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection, and passed it on to the Corinthians, and to us. The death and resurrection of Jesus: this is the gospel that we have heard, believed, and in which we stand, and by which we are saved. None of us could pay the price our sins deserve. None of us could overcome death and the grave. But for us Christ died, and for us Christ was raised, and His victory is ours, our salvation, our life, and our greatest joy. *O Lord Jesus Christ, I thank You for Your precious death and glorious resurrection for my salvation. Amen.*

WED

SCRIPTURE: **2 Samuel 22:21-29 With the Merciful and with the Pure**

These words of prayer are written by King David (after he had escaped from Saul). We also read them in Psalm 18. Especially verses 26-27 are a riddle worth contemplating. "With the pure You show Yourself pure, and with the devious You show Yourself shrewd." There is a spiritual mystery here: the Lord seems to act toward us as we expect Him to act. Apart from faith the Lord is harsh and demanding, but when we trust in the Lord Jesus we see how the Lord truly is to sinners, gentle and compassionate, longsuffering and gracious. With the merciful You show Yourself merciful. *Lord, have mercy upon us. Amen.*

THU

SCRIPTURE: **Luke 7:36-50 Much Forgiveness, Much Love**

While Mary (we think) was washing Jesus' feet with her tears and wiping them with her hair, the Pharisees were mocking, "How could He let Himself be touched by a sinner?" So, Jesus tells the parable of the two debtors. Who loves more, the man forgiven a little or the man forgiven a lot? We know that the Pharisees were also sinners, that they needed the Lord's mercy just as much as Mary, that they had much to forgive, but they didn't know it. They neither recognized nor acknowledged their sin, so they had no love for the Savior of Sinners. But we, like the woman washing Jesus' feet with her tears, know the unfathomable depth of the Lord's mercy the covers even our own sin. *Lord Jesus, I love You. Thank You for forgiving me. Amen.*

FRI

SCRIPTURE: **Romans 10:4-18 The End of the Law**

The Law shows us our sin and our desperate need for Jesus. Then Jesus comes. The Gospel forgives all our sins. The blood of Jesus washes us clean. The Holy Spirit brings faith through the Word, and we believe and call upon the Lord's name. Now there is nothing to condemn, no sin to accuse, no work needed to satisfy God. It is finished: the Law has done its chief work and brought us to the knowledge and sorrow and disgust of our own sin. Then Christ comes, with the promise of Redemption. The Law sits down, and Christ stands, blessing. God be praised! *Heavenly Father, grant us repentance by the preaching of Your Law and Your Gospel, that we might stand in the confidence of Your righteousness. Amen.*

SAT

SCRIPTURE: **Psalm 147 Praise is Beautiful**

This Psalm of praise is beautiful, especially as it brings us the wonder of God's might and grace. "He heals the brokenhearted... His understanding is infinite... The LORD lifts up the humble... [He] makes the grass grow in the mountains." The LORD upholds creation by His strength, and the LORD upholds His people by His kindness and love. "The LORD takes pleasure in those who fear Him, in those who hope in His mercy." All our hope is in His mercy, and His hope never disappoints. His promises never fail. His word endures, and with the LORD's word we also endure to life eternal. *O LORD, heal our broken hearts, bind up our wounds, strengthen the gates, lift us up and preserve us to eternal life. Amen.*

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