

Around the Word Devotions + the week of March 14-20, 2021

THEME OF THE WEEK: He Suffered the Worldliness of Sinners

Christ is our King. But what kind of King is He? We confess that He rules over all things from the Father's right hand as He has from eternity. As the Holy Spirit puts it in Hebrews 1:3, "He upholds the universe by the word of His power." But when He appeared among sinners on this earth, did He demand royal honors and glory? St. Paul teaches, "He emptied Himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men" (Phil. 2:7). Though the crowds desired a king to fill their bellies with the food that perishes, Jesus withdrew to be the humble, saving King they needed, the Priest-King who offered Himself for our sin.

SUN

SCRIPTURE: John 6:1-15 "Daily Bread"

Jesus, the Word through whom the world was made, continues to uphold and bless His creation. God be praised! What do we and the rest of the world deserve when we turn away from God? We deserve to be separated from the Source of life. We deserve to die. Yet, Jesus gives bread to good and evil alike. This mercy comes to the world because Jesus' atoning death has obtained God's kindness. In other words, because Jesus died to reconcile us to God, all people have daily bread. The Lord feeds you with more than bread for your bodies. He saves your souls. Just as He fed the crowds with bread from the disciples' hands, today He feeds the church with the preaching which came from their mouths. *Feed me Your life-giving Word, O Lord. Amen.*

MON

SCRIPTURE: Psalm 46 "Refuge and Strength"

Apocalyptic times make men act strangely. They stockpile food. They gather guns and ammunition. They make plans on how to escape their shadowy oppressors and survive. Is it possible that in the frantic race to prepare and survive that fear, love, and trust in God are lost? You bet. Our flesh wants to find saviors that we can heft in our hands. The more dangerous to our enemies, the better. But God laughs at our folly. The Lord brings desolations on the earth. He shatters the tools of war in which men trust for salvation. Every fortress and refuge collapses before Him. He alone is our Mighty Fortress, our very present help in trouble. Trust in God. Pray for daily bread. Love your neighbor. Fulfill your callings. *Save me, O Lord my Fortress. Amen.*

TUE

SCRIPTURE: Galatians 4:21-31 "An Allegory"

What a beautiful picture of who we are in Christ! At first, when the patriarch heard the promise of his coming son, he and Sarai both thought that it was up to them to make God's Word come true. Sarai gave Hagar, her servant, to Abram and Ishmael was conceived. He wasn't the son the Lord promised. The patriarch mixed faith with obedience. He confused law and gospel. Such mixtures wreck the comfort of God's grace alone for salvation. It is slavery. The Lord's saving promises cannot be kept by men, only believed. Praise God! You are children of Isaac who have been spiritually born of promise and faith, not law and obedience. We have not been born under the law as slaves but under the Gospel as free. *Grant me faith to trust in Your Word. Amen.*

WED

SCRIPTURE: Isaiah 49:8-13 "Time of Favor"

The 49th chapter of Isaiah's prophesy reveals the holy conversation between the Father and Son. The Son, in faithful obedience, cast Himself on the Father's mercy and help throughout His days of humiliation. We, on the other hand, go astray after false gods and comforts and inherit a desolate heritage of sin and death. But because of the Son's righteousness, both in His obedience to the Father's will and in His willing sacrifice for our sin, He has become a covenant, a New Testament, for us. He speaks to us who are shackled by guilt, "Come out." He says to us who are dead in sin's darkness, "Appear." His voice raises us to eternal life. Sing for joy, dear saints! "The Lord has comforted His people." *O Lord, grant me the comfort of Your Gospel. Amen.*

THU

SCRIPTURE: John 6:36-51 "Will of the Father"

What does God want from me in this life? It can be a hard question. We have many choices. Sometimes they are trivial, like where to eat lunch. Other times they are so weighty they seem nearly impossible to bear, such as moving the family to a new city. Which way does God want me to go? How will I know which way follows God's plan? Praise God that His will is perfectly revealed for your life. "This is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in Him should have eternal life, and I will raise Him up on the last day." Are you baptized? Have your sins been forgiven in Christ? Then take heart and make your choices boldly. God's will is done no matter what you eat or where you live. *O Father, Thy will be done. Amen.*

FRI

SCRIPTURE: 2 Peter 1:2-11 "Supplementing Faith with Virtue"

Is St. Peter undermining the Gospel by admonishing virtue "to make your calling and election sure?" No. The "precious and very great promises" carry the weight of salvation. They bind us by faith to Christ our brother through whom we become partakers of the divine nature. Escape from sin and death is a done deal. Now it is time to talk about virtue. There is no such thing as a Christian religion that's only the doctrine of Justification. It is only man-made religions that shut their ears against God's continued instruction in love. Therefore, with hearts resting in Christ, let us supplement our faith with godly virtue and good works. They will make our calling sure among our fellow Christians and give us joy! *Give me virtue that flows from faith. Amen.*

SAT

SCRIPTURE: Psalm 139 "Wonderful Knowledge"

Man cannot escape God's presence. If we sneak away into dark holes in the world or in our minds to delight in sin, God will find us. Not even death can remove us from God's presence. Terror is not filling David's soul in this prayer. He is delighted and joyful. Why? God's presence is comfort and peace, not judgment and condemnation. His God is reconciled, a Savior from sin and death. It is the same with you. Your God sees you and knows you, but this is the sight of a heavenly Father for His children, Who knows you have been redeemed by Jesus' blood. God didn't knit you together in the womb resenting you for all the mistakes you would make. He created you from love knowing that you would be saved. *By Your Word of grace, be with me Lord. Amen.*

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