PRAY THE PSALM OF THE WEEK  Psalm 22:19, 21, 1, 7-8, 11

But You, O Lord, do not be far from Me;*  
O My Strength, hasten to help Me!  
Save Me from the lion’s mouth*  
and from the horns of the wild oxen!  
My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?*  
Why are You so far from helping Me.  
All those who see Me ridicule Me;*  
they shoot out the lip, they shake the head.  
They say “He trusted in the Lord, let Him rescue Him:*  
let Him deliver Him, since He delights in Him!”  
Be not far from Me, for trouble is near;*  
for there is none to help.

BLESS YOURSELF WITH THE HOLY CROSS AND SAY:
In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

PRAY THE LORD’S PRAYER  
Almighty God, our heavenly Father, who sent Your Son, our Savior Jesus Christ to take upon Him our flesh and to suffer death upon the cross that all mankind should follow the example of His great humility, mercifully grant that we may both be guided by His patience in this life and also be made partakers of His resurrection; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

PRAY THE MORNING OR EVENING PRAYER

Morning: I thank You, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have kept me this night from all harm and danger; and I pray that You would keep me this day also from sin and every evil, that all my doings and life may please You. For into Your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let Your holy angel be with me, that the evil foe may have no power over me. Amen.

Evening: I thank you, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have graciously kept me this day; and I pray that You would forgive me all my sins where I have done wrong, and graciously keep me this night. For into Your hands, I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let Your holy angel be with me, that the evil foe may have no power over me. Amen.
THEME OF THE WEEK: He Suffered All the Penalties of Human Sin

Jesus rides humbly into Jerusalem. Jesus speaks. Jesus blesses. Jesus washes His disciples’ feet. Jesus gives His body and blood. Jesus prays. Jesus is arrested. Jesus is mocked. Jesus is beaten. Jesus is spat upon. Jesus is whipped. Jesus forgives. Jesus is nailed to the cross. Jesus blesses. Jesus is abandoned. Jesus suffers. Jesus cries out. Jesus dies. Jesus rests. Jesus lives, He still lives, and He lives for you. This is Holy Week, the week especially set aside for remembering the suffering and death of Jesus, and for knowing that all this He suffered for you. This, your salvation, is His joy. And He is joyful knowing that you trust in His promises.

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 21:1-9 A Different Kind of Triumphal Entry

Jesus rides into Jerusalem on a donkey, not a warhorse. He leads a choir of children, not an army. He comes lowly, meek, and ready to die. The church sings, “Ride on, ride on in majesty; in lowly pomp ride on to die.” It is horrible and wonderful that the triumph of Jesus is His suffering and death. His glory is His crucifixion. His defeat is His triumph, because in His death Jesus wins for us the saving mercy of God. In His death Jesus suffers what we deserve so that He might take away the wrath of God and give us eternal life. So we also rejoice and sing, “Hosanna! Lord, save us!” Lord Jesus Christ, we praise You for Your suffering and death, and the glory of Your saving work for us. Amen.

SCRIPTURE: Psalm 61 For the Overwhelmed Heart

King David teaches us to pray, “When My heart is overwhelmed, lead me to the rock that is higher than I.” If you’ve ever had an overwhelmed heart, this Psalm is for you. This prayer is for you. See how God is described, “You have been a shelter for me, a strong tower… a tabernacle.” The Lord knows we have enemies. The Lord knows we are under attack (from the world, the flesh, and the devil, at least). The Lord knows we are weak and in trouble, and He hears our prayers, and comes to help. He truly is our shelter in the trouble, and He prevents all that overwhelms our heart from taking our faith and life. O my God, I will sing praise to Your name forever. Amen.

SCRIPTURE: Philippians 2:5-11 Humbled and Exalted

Jesus is humble. More: Jesus is humbled. More: Jesus is humiliated. He is beaten and mocked and spit on. His beard is torn, and His clothes. He hangs from the cross in the midst of taunts and jeers. “He trusted God. Let Him save Him. He saved others…” Even His crown was meant to mock Him. The crowds walking by shook their head and looked away. Jesus despised this shame (see Hebrews 12:2), but there was joy set before Him. So “He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross” (Philippians 2:8) to win for us, for us!, eternal glory. O Lord Jesus, we give You thanks for your suffering and humble death for us. Give us joy in the fruit of Your humility: our salvation. Amen.

SCRIPTURE: Zechariah 9:9, 10 How to Recognize Your King

Written in Jerusalem around 518 BC, Zechariah gives the people a 551 year “head’s up.” They are told how they will recognize their coming king: “Behold Your King is coming to you, righteous and having salvation, lowly and riding on a donkey” (Zechariah 9:9). We might want a king who comes in glory, who comes in power, who comes in triumph, who comes to make our enemies tremble and our troubles retreat. But we have a King who comes to die, and we recognize Him by His humility, His suffering, and His love. We recognize Him by His cross. O Lord, imprint Your image on our hearts. Grant that we would always recognize You by Your humility and love, Your compassion and gentle kindness towards us sinners. Amen.

SCRIPTURE: (Maundy Thursday) Mark 14:17-26 The Best Last Testament

1,986 years ago today Jesus instituted the mean of the New Testament. Many English translations of the Bible say “new covenant”, “this is My blood of the new covenant” (Mark 14:24). This is wrong. A covenant lasts until death. Marriage, for example, is a covenant, “till death us do part.” A testament, on the other hand, begins at death. When Jesus gives us His supper He is giving us the benefits of His death. We are the children of this glorious inheritance, and every Sunday the last will and testament is read, and the treasures distributed: “This is My body. This is My blood, poured out for you for the forgiveness of sins.” Heavenly Father, we behold the glorious manner of love that You have for us, that we are Your children, and inheritors of the Testament of Jesus. Amen.

SCRIPTURE: (Good Friday) Psalm 22:1-11 Forsaken for You

Jesus bears our sins and carries our sorrow (see Isaiah 53-4). Like the scapegoat, all our sins were placed on Jesus (see Leviticus 16:21). Jesus, incredibly, was “made sin” (2 Corinthians 5:21). The business of the cross is this: Jesus is there in our place, suffering for our sins, getting the wrath that we deserve. The theological language for this is “penal substitutionary atonement”. Penal means that Jesus is suffering the legal ramifications of our own transgressions. Substitutionary means that Jesus is in our place: He is our substitute. Atonement means that the price is being paid to restore the smile of God. And it comes down to this: Jesus, our sin bearer, is forsaken by God so that we might know God’s love. Lord Jesus, we love You. Amen.

SCRIPTURE: (Holy Saturday) Psalm 67 I Know of a Rest in Jesus’ Name

Our chief concern in life is this: does the Lord smile or frown at us? If it were up to us, to our efforts and works, we deserve and expect God’s frown. But Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ has suffered and died in our place, and He has won the victory: the smile of God. Wrath is turned away. Mercy is ours, and kindness and joy in the forgiveness of our sins. Heaven is ours, and the kingdom of God, the new heaven and earth where righteousness will dwell. Jesus has prevailed, and He has won God’s favor, and He delivers these to us. We have a rest in Jesus’ name, the rest of faith, and the confident hope that the Lord is our righteousness. God be merciful to us and bless us, and cause Your face to shine upon us! Amen.

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