Psalm 44:23, 25-26, 1-3, 7-8

Awake! Why do You sleep, O Lord? Arise! Do not cast us off for ever. For our soul is bowed down to the dust: arise for our help and redeem us. We have heard with our ears, O God, our fathers have told us the deeds You did in days of old: You drove out the nations with Your hand, but you planted our fathers because you favored them. You have saved us from our enemies, and have put to shame those who hated us. In God we boast all day long, and praise Your name for ever.

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
Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth. And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God, the Father Almighty. From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

Morning. 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 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.

PRAYER FOR OURSELVES AND OTHERS
O God, because You know that we dare not put our trust in anything that we do, mercifully grant that by Your power we may be defended against all adversity; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

SING OR SAY THE HYMN OF THE WEEK
TLH 500, LSB 823

May God Bestow on Us His Grace
Martin Luther

1. May God bestow on us His grace, With blessings rich provide us, And may the brightness of His face To life eternal guide us That we His saving health may know, His gracious will and pleasure, And also to the heathen show Christ's riches without measure And unto God convert them.

2. Thine over all shall be the praise And thanks of every nation, And all the world with joy shall raise The voice of exultation; For Thou shalt judge the earth, O Lord, Nor suffer sin to flourish; Thy people's pasture is Thy Word Their souls to feed and nourish, In righteous paths to keep them.
THEME OF THE WEEK: The Lord’s Call to Faith in His Grace

Where do I turn for comfort? Is it in my works? Of course not! Is it in my ability to do the things that are required of me? I surely hope not! Is it in my ability to choose the ways of God and accept Jesus? Goodness, I am pretty sure I could never do that! So where is it? What is my faith in and where is my comfort placed? It is in the grace of God: in the undeserved forgiveness of sins won on the cross and given in His Word. It is in that Word that grants to me the things of salvation despite all logic and reason telling me differently. It is in Jesus: Him alone. Him dead on a cross and risen from the grave and ascended into heaven and given to me in time and place. This is all for me! And I didn’t earn an ounce of it!

SCRIPTYRE: Luke 8:4-15—The Purpose of Parables

We think that parables are given in order to make things clearer, but they aren’t. In fact, they usually seem to make no sense at all. They aren’t reasonable or rational, like the things of the Law. Instead, they are strange and backward, like the things of the Gospel. The Gospel makes no sense. Forgiveness of sins, life, salvation, the cross, all of these things are done the exact opposite of how we would do them. In our text the Sower is haphazardly throwing around seed without a care in the world. It is all like the things of the Law. Instead, they are strange and backward, like the things of the Gospel. The Gospel makes no sense. Forgiveness of sins, life, salvation, the cross, all of these things are done the exact opposite of how we would do them. In our text the Sower is haphazardly throwing around seed without a care in the world. It is all like the things of the Law.

SCRIPTURE: Psalm 24—Climbing to the Top

Who shall ascend the hill of the Lord? Not me, that’s for sure. I don’t have clean hands and I certainly don’t have a pure heart. Each and every day I lift up my soul to evil and deceit. There is nothing good within me. How in the world am I to ascend the hill of the Lord? I can’t. I won’t. Not in and of myself. And so My God comes down to me. He comes to me! In Words of absolution that forgive my sins, in a wet forehead brought me and raises me to life, in fleshly bread and bloody wine to unite me to Him. My God comes down to where I am; here in this muck and mire of sin. And then He lifts me up, carries me up the hill, takes me to the very top to be with Him. Again, it’s the way of our Lord: Doing the things that are required of me and then giving me the credit. Thanks be to God! Oh Lord, make me worthy to ascend Your holy hill. Amen.

SCRIPTURE: 2 Corinthians 11:19-12:9—A Time for Boasting

There is none who could boast like Paul. Seriously, who among us could indeed hold a candle to Paul and all of the boastings that he had? If any man had earned salvation, it was Paul. But he didn’t. And he knew it. All of his good works were like filthy rags when seen in the light of salvation. And so he only boasted of his weakness, because it was there that he was made perfect in Christ. If we were to boast in our goodness, it would be a worthless endeavor. No one is perfect, not even one. So instead we boast in our weakness: that we are poor miserable sinners whom Christ died for. My boasting is in the Lord, in Jesus, in the cross for me! For that is the only thing that matters: Jesus. Jesus for you. Jesus for me. Jesus for the sinner. If we boast, let us boast in Jesus. Gracious God, may I always turn from my own works and boast only in You. Amen.

SCRIPTURE: Psalm 25—A Prayer

O Lord, I lift up my soul to You. Where else could I go? Save me from sin and death and the devil. Lead me in Your ways that I may know that I am Yours. Remember Your love for me in Christ. Do not look upon my sins or my worthless works, but on Him alone. Keep me steadfast in Your covenant, faithful in Your testimonies. May I forever fear You above all else. And when I fail, pardon me in Christ, for I know I deserve nothing but damnation. Repent me, turn me, lead me in Your Truth, for my heart is heavy and my sins are great. Guard me and keep me in the one true faith, for I cannot do it myself. Forgive me today and tomorrow and all the days of my life. Redeem me from my enemies that I may live with You in everlasting righteousness and blessedness forever. Amen.

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