

Around the Word Devotions + the week of June 25-July 1, 2023

THEME OF THE WEEK: The Repentance Wrought by the Spirit

By our own reason and strength we poor sinners are incapable of producing the godly repentance that leads to salvation. But the Holy Spirit works true repentance in our hearts through the Word of God. First, He brings us to contrition, or sorrow over our sin, by the Law. Then, He creates in us faith, born of the Gospel, which trusts that our sin is forgiven for Jesus' sake. These are the two parts of repentance, that the sinner might have comfort and confidence before God, a comfort and confidence that could never be the work of man, but the divine and glorious work of our gracious and merciful Lord.

SUN

SCRIPTURE: Luke 15:1-10 Jesus Sinners Doth Receive

"This man receives sinners and eats with them." The Pharisees and scribes were right in their observation but wrong in their conclusion. They thought that Jesus was sullied by the company He kept, that the sins of others corrupted Him. But, on the contrary, Jesus freely gave His righteousness, innocence, and blessedness to those sinners whom He received and with whom He ate. This is no less true today. When we enter the Lord's presence and eat His Supper, we receive the same gifts that forgive us and make us righteous before our Father in heaven. *Good Shepherd, receive us as Your own that we might have forgiveness in You. Amen.*

MON

SCRIPTURE: Psalm 119, third part (GIMEL v17-24) Open My Eyes

The Word of God is the greatest treasure we could possibly possess, more desirable than much fine gold, for it is Spirit and life. The New Man, created in us by the Holy Spirit through Baptism, longs for, meditates on, and delights in the Word. But the Old Adam, who still remains until the day we die, does not accept the things of the Spirit. Therefore it is good that our study of Scripture begin with and be accompanied by the prayer offered in this psalm: "Open my eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of your law." *Lord, open now my heart to hear, and through Your Word to me draw near. Amen.*

TUE

SCRIPTURE: 1 Peter 5:6-11 God Cares for You

When the disciples were caught in a great windstorm on the sea, they woke Jesus and said to him, "Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?" (Mark 4:38) Such doubt is the work of the devil himself, who prowls around like a roaring lion. We must resist him, not by trusting in our own strength but by humbling ourselves, casting all our anxieties on God, and standing firm in faith that He cares for us. And in His perfect time, He will bring our sufferings to an end, just as He once calmed the storm on the sea. *Strengthen us, O Lord, in the confidence that You care for us. Amen.*

WED

SCRIPTURE: Micah 7:18-20 There Is No Other God

"Who is a God like You?" There is no other. For the only true God is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. The only true God became Man for us men and for our salvation. The only true God bore our sins and atoned for them by His holy, precious blood and His innocent suffering and death. The only true God is risen indeed, lives and reigns to all eternity. The only true God casts all our sins into the depths of the sea by His grace alone. *You alone, O Lord Jesus Christ, are the one true God, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, now and forever. Amen.*

THU

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 16:13-20 On This Rock

"But who do you say that I am?" Throughout His ministry, Jesus demonstrated who He is: the Man who receives sinners and eats with them, the Good Shepherd who seeks out His lost sheep, the Christ, the Son of the living God. Peter's confession in answer to Jesus' question puts Christ at the center. He is the Foundation, the Chief Cornerstone, on which the Church is built. Whoever believes in Him will not be put to shame. As long as the Church is built on the confession of Jesus Christ and Him crucified, the gates of hell will never prevail. *Father, grant us Your Holy Spirit that we may rightly confess Jesus Christ to be Lord. Amen.*

FRI

SCRIPTURE: Acts 9:1-18 The Conversion of Saul

Was there any man more unlikely to be a Christian than Saul? He was a blasphemer, persecutor, and insolent opponent of Jesus. But the grace of our Lord overflowed for him. He converted Saul from unbelief to faith and appointed him to be the Apostle to the Gentiles. Christ did this to "display His perfect patience as an example to those who were to believe in Him for eternal life." (1 Timothy 3:16) If the grace of our Lord can overflow for the foremost of sinners, it certainly overflows to cover all our sins too. *We praise You, O God, for You have called us to be Your own by the Gospel. Amen.*

SAT

SCRIPTURE: Psalm 25 To You, O Lord, I Lift Up My Soul

David lifts up his soul to the Lord: a soul that has sinned in youth, that has committed many transgressions, that has borne great guilt. Nevertheless David trusts that the God of his salvation will pardon his guilt and forgive all his sins. Such faith is never put to shame. In the same faith we enter into God's presence confessing all our sins and iniquities and asking for God's mercy, and in response we hear, "I forgive you all your sins in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen." *Have mercy on me, O God, according to Your steadfast love. Amen.*

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