



“Resisting the Unforgiving Flesh”

5 PRAY THE PSALM OF THE WEEK **Psalm 130:4-5, 1-2, 7-8**

If You, Lord, should mark in- / iquities,*
 O Lord, / who could stand?
 But there is forgive- / ness with You,*
 that You / may be feared.
 Out of the depths I have cried to / You, O Lord;*
 Lord, / hear my voice!
 Let Your ears be at- / tentive*
 to the voice of my suppli- / cations.
 O Israel, hope / in the Lord;*
 for with the Lord there is / mercy,
 With Him is abundant re- / demption,*
 and He shall redeem Israel from all his in- / iquities.

6 SAY TOGETHER THE VERSE OF THE WEEK **Psalm 130:3**
 “If Thou, Lord, shouldst mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?”

7 READ THE SCRIPTURE AND DEVOTION (OTHER SIDE OF THE PAGE)

8 PRAY THE PRAYER OF THE WEEK
 O God, our Refuge and Strength, the Author of all godliness, be ready, we implore You, to hear the devout prayers of Your Church, especially in times of persecution, and grant that those things which we ask faithfully we may obtain effectually; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

9 PRAYER FOR OURSELVES AND OTHERS

10 SING OR SAY THE HYMN OF THE WEEK TLH 34, LSB 820
My Soul, Now Bless Thy Maker Johann Gramann



1. My soul, now bless thy Maker!
 Let all within me bless His name
 Who maketh thee partaker
 Of mercies more than thou dar'st claim.
 Forget Him not whose meekness
 Still bears with all thy sin,
 Who healeth all thy weakness,
 Renews thy life within;
 Whose grace and care are endless
 And saved thee through the past;
 Who leaves no sufferer friendless,
 But rights the wronged at last.

4. God's grace alone endureth,
 And children's children yet shall prove
 How He with strength assureth
 The hearts of all that seek His love.
 In heaven is fixed His dwelling,
 His rule is over all;
 Angels, in might excelling,
 Bright hosts, before Him fall.
 Praise Him, who ever reigneth,
 All ye who hear His Word,
 Nor our poor hymns disdaineth-
 My soul, oh, bless the Lord!

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

2 SAY THE APOSTLES' CREED
 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.

3 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.

4 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: Resisting the Unforgiving Flesh

“Counting down” the Sundays in the church year (“third-last Sunday,” etc) has a modest pedigree of only forty years in Lutheran worship. The more historic and salutary practice is to “count up” the Sundays, always ending with Trinity 27. The date for Easter 2022 makes this week the penultimate Sunday in the church year, with special focus on resisting the unforgiving flesh. Readings unfold the realities of God’s full and free forgiveness, viewed through a perfect balance of Old and New Testament texts. As the hymn puts it, “[The Lord] offers all His treasure / Of justice, truth, and righteousness, His love beyond all measure” (LSB 820.2).

SUN

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 18:23-35 The Parable of the Unforgiving Servant

The new student debt relief plan may sound appealing, but this “forgiveness” is really a transfer of debt to the tax payers. How different it is with today’s parable! This King marks iniquities under the Law, but He also bears the debt of the penitent according to the Gospel. Who is the servant, then, who cannot forgive his fellow debtor? Only one who knows not the gravity of his own sin. But your faith knows that abundance of mercy is required, and so you cry for God’s clemency out of the depths, banking everything on Jesus’ blood. Thus you sincerely forgive and gladly do good to those who sin against you. *Jesus, all our ransom paid, All Your Father’s will obeyed; By Your sufferings perfect made: Hear us, holy Jesus (LSB 447.16). Amen.*

MON

SCRIPTURE: Psalm 119:169-176 PSALM INTRODUCTION (to be read before praying the Psalm)

Following the structure of the Hebrew alphabet, twenty-two stanzas of eight verses each proclaim the fullness of God’s countenance in Psalm 119, including 125 references to the Word (or statutes, commandments, etc.). The final eight verses of Psalm 119 shift the focus to fifteen references to you: “My cry,” “My plea,” “My lips,” etc. See how these final verses describe your entire body and soul, heart and mind, i.e., the whole lot of you. For you have heard God’s Word, believed it in penitent faith, and taken up the Psalter as Christ’s own prayer through you, His saint. *Stay with us, Lord, and keep us true; Preserve our faith our whole life through—Your Word alone our heart’s defense, The Church’s glorious confidence (LSB 585.6). Amen.*

TUE

SCRIPTURE: Philippians 1:3-11 A Prayer-Report, Postmarked Philippi

At the very place where secular Greek letters included well-wishes, St. Paul turns to what we might call a two-fold “prayer-report.” See how he loved them! Having heard the report of their faith, He prays in thanks to God that the church at Philippi has believed the word of Jesus’ cross and resurrection (vss. 3-8). He prays for their increased love and faithfulness, with the confidence that God never forsakes His people and will keep them to the end of days. Similarly, you offer thanksgiving for partaking of the mysteries of the faith and pray that you will be kept faithful to the end. *Blessed Jesus, Son of God... Guide me that I never may / From Your fold or pastures stray, But with zeal and joy exceeding / Follow where Your steps are leading (LSB 692.1). Amen.*

WED

SCRIPTURE: Deuteronomy 7:9-11 “You, My People, Shall be Holy”

Your first answer to the question, Who are you? is your primary identifier. Some of these identities are given by God (e.g., male or female). Others are allowed by Him (e.g., Padres fan). Many are forbidden by Him (e.g., LGBTQ). Right before entering the Promised Land, God spoke through Moses regarding Israel’s God-given identity: “The Lord has...redeemed you from the house of slavery” (v. 8). Therefore, being God’s holy people, they must keep God’s commandments, forsaking the false gods of Canaan. And you? Your primary identifier is baptismal child of God. Therefore you hold God’s Word to be sacred as you gladly hear and learn it. *Soul of Christ, hallow me. Body of Christ, save me. Water from the side of Christ, wash me. Amen.*

THU

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 18:1-20 “Who is the Greatest in God’s Kingdom?”

American evangelicals tend to give object lessons to the little children, while adults judge the preacher’s skills with children. But Jesus used a little child as an object lesson for the adults. Picture this unsuspecting little child as you read this lesson. You must become like a little child in the kingdom of heaven through repentance (vss. 1-6); be careful not to lead children astray (vss. 7-9); care for them as if they were your own sheep (vss. 10-14); and call them to repentance when they stray (vss. 15-20). Thus the church baptizes infants as if they were adults and adults as if they were infants, for all must become as little children in God’s kingdom. *Heavenly Father, lead us not into temptation, rescue us when we stray, and bring us to everlasting life. Amen.*

FRI

SCRIPTURE: Ephesians 4:30-32 An Epistle of New Life in Christ, Postmarked Ephesus

See the baptismal shape of this reading! You were “sealed for the day of redemption” (v. 30) when the pastor placed the sign of the cross upon you, possibly accompanied by anointing with oil. All sins shall “be put away from you, along with all malice” (v. 31), as symbolized by the white baptismal robe, emblematic of the covering of your sin with Christ’s own righteousness. And you will be “kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another” (v. 32), as symbolized by the baptismal candle and the admonition to live always by the light of Christ. *Heavenly Father, send Your Holy Spirit into our hearts to direct and rule us according to Your will, to comfort us in all our afflictions, to defend us from all error, and to lead us into all truth. Amen.*

SAT

SCRIPTURE: Psalm 31 PSALM INTRODUCTION (to be read before praying the Psalm)

Thomas Aquinas describes this Psalm as “the voice of Christ, hanging on the cross and praying for Himself and for His faithful people.” See you pray to and with the Trinity! You pray to the Father to be free from all ills and to rest in the quiet confidence of His promise to hear His children when they pray (vss. 1-8). You join with the prayer of Christ the Son as you suffer for the sake of the Gospel, even when it feels as if God has forsaken you (vss. 9-13). And you pray through the Spirit, confident in His gifts of mercy for all who have heard the word of Jesus’ death and life, and who await the final retribution of evil on the last day (vss. 14-24). *Come, Lord Jesus! Crown of gladness! We are yearning / For the day of your returning (LSB 395.6). Amen.*

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