PRAY THE PSALM OF THE WEEK  Psalm 48:1, 3, 11, 14, 9-10
We have thought, O God, on Your loving kindness,*
in the midst of Your temple.
According to Your name, O God, so is Your praise to the ends / of the earth:*
Your right hand is full of / righteousness.
Great is the Lord, and greatly / to be praised*
in the city of our God, in His holy / mountain.
God is in her / palaces:*
He is known as her / refuge.
Let Mount Zion rejoice, let the daughters of Ju: / dah be glad,*
because of Your / judgments.
For this is God, our God forever and / ever:*
He will be our guide even / unto death.

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

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.

PRAY THE MORNING OR EVENING PRAYER
Grant to us, Lord, we implore You, the Spirit to think and do always such things as are right, that we, who cannot do anything that is good without You, may by You be enabled to live according to Your will: through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord. Amen.

O Lord, Look Down from Heaven, Behold

1. O Lord, look down from heaven, behold
   And let Thy pity waken:
   How few are we within Thy Fold,
   Thy saints by men forsaken!
   True faith seems quenched on every hand,
   Men suffer not Thy Word to stand:
   Dark times have us o’ertaken.

2. By right or might we shall prevail:
   What we determine cannot fail:
   We own no lord and master.”

3. May God root out all heresy
   And of false teachers rid us
   Who proudly say: “Now, where is he
   That shall our speech forbid us?

4. As silver tried by fire is pure
   From all adulteration,
   So through God’s Word shall men endure
   Each trial and temptation.
   Its light beams brighter through the cross,
   And, purified from human dross,
   It shines through every nation.

5. As Lord, look down from heaven, behold
   And let Thy pity waken:
   How few are we within Thy Fold,
   Thy saints by men forsaken!
   True faith seems quenched on every hand,
   Men suffer not Thy Word to stand:
   Dark times have us o’ertaken.

6. By right or might we shall prevail:
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7. May God root out all heresy
   And of false teachers rid us
   Who proudly say: “Now, where is he
   That shall our speech forbid us?”

8. As silver tried by fire is pure
   From all adulteration,
   So through God’s Word shall men endure
   Each trial and temptation.
   Its light beams brighter through the cross,
   And, purified from human dross,
   It shines through every nation.
THEME OF THE WEEK: Living Orthodoxy: Devotion to the Pure Doctrine of God

“Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every Word that comes from the mouth of God,” (Mt. 4:4). The message of the prophets and apostles, the whole of Scripture, which culminates in Christ crucified, is God-breathed (2 Timothy 3:16). It is to this Word of God that we are called to conform all doctrine, all teaching, and our whole lives. This Word is the firm foundation upon which the Church is built; all other ground is sinking sand. False prophets, wolves in sheep’s clothing, will come and distort the Message of the Gospel. St. John tells us, “Test the spirits!” (1 John 4:1-6). Their message must be weighed and measured against the sure Word of God as recorded for us in Holy Scripture. The Word of the Lord endures forever. It alone is the sure foundation, on which we build. Only here can salvation be found.

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 7:15-23 Beware the False Prophets

False prophets look like sheep but are in reality wolves. They preach a gospel foreign to the Gospel of grace in Christ Jesus, found only in the Word of God. Those who twist Scripture to fit their whim and contort the Word of God do injustice to it. They use the imagination of their hearts as the rule and norm for their teaching, not the Word of God. Only where Christ crucified is preached in purity of doctrine and in conformity with the message of all the prophets and apostles is there life. The Word of the Lord endures forever.

Lord, preserve all pastors and ministers of Your Church in the true knowledge and understanding of Your wholesome Word and sustain them in holy living. Amen.

SCRIPTURE: Psalm 119:57-64 (HETH) The Lord Is Our Portion

The Lord shows us His favor. He is gracious to us according to His promise in Christ Jesus, Who has won for us salvation. The Law of God, which would condemn us in our sin, holds no more threats to us who live under Grace! And so, we who have died with Christ to sin and been raised to newness of life keep the words of the Lord: we hasten to keep His commandments. Not out of fear, but out of love, knowing that in Christ we have God’s great gift of forgiveness and Life. Praise be to God who is gracious to us according to His Promise!

Lord, thank You for keeping Your promise of salvation to us. Grant us to live according to Your Word. Amen.

SCRIPTURE: Romans 8:12-17 The Spirit of Adoption

We who have received the Spirit of adoption as sons in Holy Baptism have become the children of God. As His children, then also His heirs. Our inheritance is the glory of life eternal with Christ, when we shall see our God face to face. Having received such a great inheritance, let us not fall back into the slavery of sin and life according to passions of the flesh, but let us live to God. The Spirit Himself bears witness that we are His dear children, and so God tenderly invites us to pray to Him as our dear Father with all boldness and confidence.

God our Father, we praise You for our adoption as Your children. Strengthen our faith that we may ask You for all our needs of body and soul, as dear children ask their dear father. Amen.

SCRIPTURE: Jeremiah 15:19-21 The Word of the Lord

What is more precious than the Word of the Lord, which endures forever? The one who speaks what is precious, namely the Word of God, and not what is worthless, namely the imagination of the heart, serves as the mouth of God to the world. There will be those who hear His Word, who will turn to the Lord in humble repentance and there will be those who turn against the Lord and His prophet. The Lord promises to save and deliver all those who speak His testimonies and confess His Name.

O Lord, grant us rightly to speak Your testimonies and confess the Truth of Your precious Word in the world. Amen.

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 7:22-29 The Sure Foundation

Every wind of doctrine and the rains of false teaching will inundate the Church. This, Jesus promises us. It is why the Church is built on the rock of the Word of God. Where the Word of God serves as the foundation for all teaching and every doctrine, there the winds and rain will not prevail against it. Many teach in the Name of Jesus but they have built their doctrine on sand, not the Word of God. These are the workers of Lawlessness. So, let us hold firm to the Word of God, our rock and foundation, in our doctrine and our lives!

Lord, keep us steadfast in Your Word: curb those who by deceit or sword would wrest the kingdom from Your Son and bring to naught all He has done. Amen.

SCRIPTURE: Acts 20:17-38 Testifying to the Gospel of Grace

As the Apostle is about to depart, he knows that wolves will come in and twist the Word of God. Be alert! Paul warns us. Take his own life as an example. He did not shrink declaring the Word of God and teaching in public. He testified of repentance toward God and of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. He counted all, even his own life, as nothing in comparison with testifying to the Gospel of grace in Jesus. The pure and wholesome doctrine of salvation is found only in Scripture and nowhere else. Heavenly Father, send us Your Holy Spirit, that we may keep Your Word and Your saving doctrine in its purity and love You above all else, even our own lives. Amen.

SCRIPTURE: Psalm 126 The Lord Restores our Fortunes

The Word of God will always be contrary to the ways of the world, which is steeped in sin. In sorrow are we confronted with this reality, but this psalm expresses the eternal joys of heaven, the hope to which we look, knowing with full assurance that it will one day be given to us who hold fast to the Word of God. “Though today we sow in sorrow, we shall reap in heavenly joy!” (TLH hymn 409). As the Word of God teaches, sin and death do not have the final word: it is God who restores the fortunes of Zion.

Lord, great us the sure hope of salvation in Your saving Word and bring us to life eternal with You. Amen.

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