PRAY THE PSALM OF THE WEEK Psalm 68:5-6, 35, 1, 3, 7, 10, 19
God is in His holy habitation.*
He gives a home to the desolate.
The God of Israel is He who gives strength* and power to His people.
Let God arise, Let His enemies be scattered:* let those also who hate Him flee before Him.
But let the righteous be glad: let them rejoice before God:* yes, let them rejoice exceedingly.
O God, when you went out before Your people,* you, O God, provided from Your goodness for the poor.
Blessed be the Lord, who daily loads us with benefits, the God of our salvation!

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
Almighty and everlasting God, who are always more ready to hear than we to pray and give more than we either desire or deserve, pour down upon us the abundance of Your mercy, forgiving those things of which our conscience is afraid and giving us those good things that we are not worthy to ask, except through the merits and mediation of Christ, our Lord: through the same Jesus Christ, Your Son, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. 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.

SING OR SAY THE HYMN OF THE WEEK TLH 329, LSB 607
From Depths of Woe I Cry to Thee
Martin Luther

1. From depths of woe I cry to Thee, Lord, hear me, I implore Thee. Bend down Thy gracious ear to me, My prayer let come before Thee. If Thou rememberest each misdeed, If each should have its rightful meed, Who may abide Thy presence?

2. Thy love and grace alone avail To blot out my transgression: The best and holiest deeds must fail To break sin’s dread oppression.

Before Thee none can boasting stand, But all must fear Thy strict demand And live alone by mercy.

3. Therefore my hope is in the Lord And not in mine own merit: It rests upon His faithful Word To them of contrite spirit That He is merciful and just: This is my comfort and my trust. His help I wait with patience.

“God, be merciful to me, a sinner.”

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

PRAYER FOR OURSELVES AND OTHERS

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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.

PRAY THE MORNING OR EVENING PRAYER
Almighty and everlasting God, who are always more ready to hear than we to pray and give more than we either desire or deserve, pour down upon us the abundance of Your mercy, forgiving those things of which our conscience is afraid and giving us those good things that we are not worthy to ask, except through the merits and mediation of Christ, our Lord: through the same Jesus Christ, Your Son, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. 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 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.

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Believing Humility

The righteousness of God is accomplished not by our achievements, but by Christ’s. His perfect life according to God’s command satisfies the Law. His innocent death in substitution for us also satisfies what our sins deserve. This is credited to all who trust this gift, and they go down to their house justified. This is shown clearly in this week’s Gospel. In the readings this week we see the fruits of such repentance and faith in our lives: love for the neighbor, comfort and hope in affliction, a humble spirit, resolve in our confession, and a life of praise to God, our Mediator and Savior.

The Tax Collector is humble in posture, but bold in faith. He is humble and lowly as it regards himself, but almost demanding of God. “Do this,” he says. And “this” is to propitiate and atone for his many sins. He is bold to demand it because God’s Word has promised it. The Lord Himself is our righteousness, through Christ’s atoning sacrifice. We claim nothing of ourselves, yet we receive and therefore claim everything from Him. This is what it means to be justified by faith. God, be merciful to me, a sinner. Amen.

David resolves to stick with the Word of God, both in its commands and promises. It remains true, though everything else be full of falsehood. Just as the tax collector trusted in the Lord’s righteousness alone, surrounded by those who hated him with and without cause, so we must cling to and long for the Lord’s salvation, hoping in His Word. Repentance and faith are summed up in this: to cling to God’s Word against our own circumstance and thinking. Lord, comfort me with Your Word and bring deliverance as You have promised. Amen.

The righteousness of God has been revealed, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. So when St. Paul rehearses the Gospel, he adds, “according to the Scriptures.” Christ’s death is for our sins, to reconcile us to the Father. His resurrection is public, so that all may see His vindication by the Father. Hold fast to this faith. Stand in it. All who do are saved. Lord, do not let me confess the Creed in vain, but in faith. Amen.

We are justified by the Lord’s righteousness, but this psalm says “my (David’s) righteousness.” This must be understood according to David’s office. The Lord rewards him with victory because David is King, serving according to the Lord’s Word and not His own. Thus, we see how incredible it is that David, valiant warrior and leader, is himself looking to the Lord for refuge. In its whole context (v.2–51), we see that the Lord is the actor here. David is saying, “the Lord’s Word proves true” (v.31). Lord, save me by Your righteousness and lead me into Your right ways. Amen.

The stage directions are important. To Simon, Jesus extolls the woman’s works. She loves much. Therefore, it is evident that her sins are forgiven. Simon is put to shame by her love. Jesus points to her to show that true love comes from being forgiven, and thus her faith is known in her works. But to the woman, Jesus says none of this. He says, simply, “Your sins are forgiven. Your faith has saved you.” Faith, not love, is credited with salvation and forgiveness. Love is faith’s natural, outward fruit. Lord, make me to treasure Your forgiveness, that my love may be for others only. Amen.

The righteousness of the Law eludes our grasp; in contrast, the righteousness of faith is at hand. Christ comes to us. He is as near as the Word of the Gospel in ear and heart and mouth. The Word is preached, heard, and believed; that faith leads the mouth to confess. This is the message that must go out to all the world: that Christ alone is our righteousness by faith. What a perfect lead in to this Sunday’s Gospel, when the Word of Christ will open our ears to hear and our mouths to speak. Lord, open my ears to hear, my heart to believe, and my mouth to confess. Amen.

The Lord’s delight is not in the men or what he prizes. It is in those who fear Him and hope in His mercy. This Psalm stands in contrast to the Pharisee’s self-aggrandizing prayer. Though jubilant compared with the tax collector’s posture, this psalm still harmonizes with his prayer. It is our response also to going to our house justified: Praise and thanksgiving. Lord, heal my broken heart and lift it up to praise You. Amen.

Around the Word Devotions + the week of August 27–September 2, 2017

THEME OF THE WEEK: Believing Humility


SCRIPTURE: Luke 7:36-50—Faith that Saves; Love that Witnesses

SCRIPTURE: Romans 10:4-18—Ears, Heart, Mouth.

SCRIPTURE: Psalm 147—God Lifts Up the Humble

SCRIPTURE: Psalm 18:9-14—The Righteousness of Faith

SCRIPTURE: Luke 7:36-50—Faith that Saves; Love that Witnesses

SCRIPTURE: Romans 10:4-18—Ears, Heart, Mouth.

SCRIPTURE: Psalm 147—God Lifts Up the Humble

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