PRAY THE PSALM OF THE WEEK Psalm 55:16-18, 22, 1, 4-5, 17, 16

As for me, I will call upon God, and He shall / hear my voice.*

He has redeemed my / soul in peace.
Cast your burden / on the Lord,*
and He shall sus/ tain you.
Give ear to my / prayer, O God,*
and do not hide Yourself from my suppli- / cation.
My heart is severely pained with- / in me,*
and the terrors of death have fallen up- / on me.
Fearfulness and trembling have come up- / on me,*
and horror has over- / whelmed me.
I will pray, and / cry aloud,*
and the Lord shall / save me.

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

SAY TOGETHER THE VERSE OF THE WEEK The Benedictus, Luke 1:68

“Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for He hath visited and redeemed His people.”

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

PRAY THE PRAYER OF THE WEEK

O God, as You declare Your almighty power above all in showing mercy and pity, mercifully grant unto us such a measure of Your grace that we may obtain Your gracious promises and be made partakers of Your heavenly treasures: through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord. Amen.

PRAYER FOR OURSELVES AND OTHERS

SING OR SAY THE HYMN OF THE WEEK

Open Now Thy Gates of Beauty

TLH 1, LSB 901
Benjamin Schmolk

1. Open now Thy gates of beauty,
Zion, let me enter there,
Where my soul in joyful duty
Waits for Him who answers prayer.
Oh, how blessed is this place,
Filled with solace, light, and grace!
2. Lord, my God, I come before Thee,
Come Thou also unto me;
Where we find Thee and adore Thee,
There a heaven on earth must be.
To my heart, oh, enter Thou,
Let it be Thy temple now!
3. Here Thy praise is gladly chanted,
Here Thy seed is dully sown;
Let my soul, where it is planted,
Bring forth precious sheaves alone,
So that all I hear may be
Fruitful unto life in me.
4. Thou my faith increase and quicken,
Let me keep Thy gift divine,
Howsoe'er temptations thicken:
May Thy Word still o'er me shine
As my guiding star through life,
As my comfort in my strife.

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:** The Worship of God Wrought by the Spirit

The highest form of worship is the worship of faith, which receives God’s gifts and trusts in Him. From this, flows true confessions, good works, and love for the neighbor. Where sinners are justified by faith, they have peace with God. Christ’s visitation to Jerusalem was to bring them—and all the world—peace through the forgiveness of sins. He offered the true Divine Service, the culmination and true source of the Temple’s mediating work, in His shed blood. And thus “repentance for the forgiveness of sins is to be preached in His Name to all the world, beginning at Jerusalem.”

**SUN**

**SCRIPTURE:** Luke 19:41-48—The Day of Visitation

Many visitors came to Jerusalem, the ironically named city. The prophets of the Lord they abused and killed. The foreign powers and pagan gods they received with open arms and trust. The final visitation was about to come upon them: Emperor Titus with his Roman troops. But the penultimate visitation was the true visitation. Here the Lord came in the flesh not to make war but to bring what truly makes for peace: His own blood. It is the sufficient sacrifice upon which all other prayers are to be offered and heard. *Blessed are You, Lord God of Israel, for You have visited and redeemed Your people. Amen.*

**MON**

**SCRIPTURE:** Psalm 119:73-80—Steadfast Mercy in the Lord’s Word

The Lord has created us not for destruction but for His mercy. When He afflicts His own, it is always in faithfulness and for our good. His wrath endures a short time; His mercy endures forever. In the midst of affliction, Christians turn again to the Word and promises of God. When faith is tested, it endures by clinging to what cannot be broken. And those who fear God are constantly astounded and encouraged at the sight of their fellow Christians enduring suffering. They know also that the Word of the Lord is sure. *Let my heart rest in Your Word, Lord, when sin, suffering, and the world are seeking my shame. Amen.*

**TUE**

**SCRIPTURE:** 1 Corinthians 12:1-11—The Spirit’s Harmonious Voice

Idols have mouths, but they speak not. And they that make them are like fools born of Satan. Repentance is always the call of a prophet, whether eating or fasting. The dirge of the Law’s accusation must cause us to mourn our sin as surely as the flute of the Gospel’s forgiveness must make us dance. *Lord, give us ears to hear. Amen.*

**WED**

**SCRIPTURE:** Jeremiah 7:1-7—Using God’s Name as a Cover for Evil

God delights in truth in the inward being—and He judges the heart, not the outward appearance. Thus it is particularly dangerous to use God’s good Word and Name to “sanctify” our iniquity. Israel was “trusting” in the Temple—not because they sought the forgiveness and holy presence it imparted, but because they believed it would protect them for their own sakes. We are able to call upon God to “bless” what He forbids also, and woe to us for that. Rather, let us hear God’s Word and keep it, that His blessing may not be a lie upon us. *Lord, preserve Your Word from all deceptive uses. Amen.*

**THU**

**SCRIPTURE:** Matt 11:16-24—The Wisdom of Law & Gospel

Cynicism is a strong tool of the Devil. It mocks the Holy Spirit, much like Pilate did Christ: “What is truth?” The signs of Christ were mighty, but they gained Him no worship from the self-satisfied. Neither John’s ascetic style nor Christ’s earthy manner could reach them. They were not children of wisdom, but fools born of Satan. Repentance is always the call of a prophet, whether eating or fasting. The dirge of the Law’s accusation must cause us to mourn our sin—as surely as the flute of the Gospel’s forgiveness must make us dance. *Lord, give us ears to hear. Amen.*

**FRI**

**SCRIPTURE:** Hebrews 3:7-15—Today

By a trick (or maybe on purpose), the Venite omits the second half of Psalm 95—quoted in Hebrews. We prefer lambs and happiness to warnings. But we need this warning. It was God’s own chosen people who were hardened and refused to hear God’s Word or enter His rest. The Gospel is always preached “today.” The call to repentance is continual. Faith, likewise, is continual. We do not hear once and go our way: we abide in His Word, and thus are His disciples. As long as it is “today,” so often do we need to take heed to the voice of the living God. *Lord, preserve me from an evil, unbelieving heart. Amen.*

**SAT**

**SCRIPTURE:** Psalm 143—Your Righteousness

The presence of enemies makes us cry out for help, but on what basis should we plead? We throw ourselves always on the mercy of God in Christ, which means we plead not our own righteousness but His. We ask God to enter into judgment with us and for us only by Jesus’ blood. In this we have righteousness that brings us out of trouble. In it we have a Name that can be invoked. In it we have the Lord’s gracious face and steadfast love, and a firm handhold for faith. Stretch out the hand of faith to grasp God in His righteousness, not our own. *Teach me to do Your will, for You are my God. Amen.*

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