PRAY THE PSALM OF THE WEEK Psalm 25:1-3a, 4-5, 21-22
To You, O Lord, I lift up my soul.*
O my God, I trust in You; Let me not be ashamed;
Let not my enemies triumph over me.*
Let no one who waits on You be ashamed.
Show me Your ways, O Lord;* teach me Your paths.
For You are the God of my salvation;* on You I wait all the day.
Let integrity and uprightness precede me,* for I wait for You.
Redeem Israel, O God,* out of all their troubles.

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
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.
Around the Word Devotions + the week of December 1-7, 2019

THEME OF THE WEEK: The Lord Comes Even Now

The dawning of the church’s new year is the dawning of Christ’s presence among His people. The prophet Zechariah saw Christ’s coming from afar. More than just seeing Jesus enter Jerusalem, he saw Jesus’ righteousness coming to you. In your time he saw his ancient pagan foes defeated and forgotten. Peace has been spoken to the Gentiles. He saw Christ’s gracious rule extending from sea to sea. Through Jesus’ sacrificed blood, the prisoners in sin’s waterless pit have been set free. When Satan tempts towards despair, “Return to your stronghold, O prisoners of hope!” (Zech. 9:12) Return to Christ by hearing and believing His Word.

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 21:1-9 The Humility of the Lord that Comes Even Now

Ostentatious displays of glory mark days of consequence and celebration. Think about the pomp surrounding presidential inaugurations, national holidays, the Olympics, and graduations from college. The anthems, parades, speeches, and flyovers help teach our kids that something important is happening. But where’s Christ’s glory when He enters Jerusalem? Where are the fireworks and fanfares to signal His divine kingship over all things? Jesus doesn’t come in glory to shock and awe. Jesus comes in humility to save by the Word and faith. He comes as a servant, a sin bearer, and the sacrifice to expiate the world’s sin. Heavenly Father, teach me to despise the world’s pomp and cling to true heavenly glory clothed in your Son’s Word. Amen.

SCRIPTURE: Psalm 1 An Introduction to the Songs of the Saints

Nothing serves Satan’s plans quite as well as boredom, the thought that you’ve heard all this ‘Christian’ stuff before. It never changes, so why should I pay attention? Pay attention because you live in the drought-stricken wastes of a world warped into the image of men’s sins. Pay attention because the winds of God’s judgement are beginning to blow. Under its blast this world’s works and ways must wither and perish. But blessed is the man whose delight is in the law of the Lord, and on His law he meditates day and night. Neither the blight of sin nor the wrath of God’s judgment can uproot him. Planted in the cool streams of instruction and mercy he lives eternally. Teach me to delight and be instructed in the songs of Your saints, O Lord. Amen.

SCRIPTURE: Romans 13:11-14 Salvation is Near

Being unable to see the coming day of judgment doesn’t mean that it’s not coming at all. And yet that’s how the demons have convinced many in the church to pursue lives in service of mammon and depravity. They’ve convinced the Christians that earthly immorality is greater than the life to come. Or at least they’ve convinced them to think that they’ll have enough forewarning to put their lives in order before the day. This is spiritual death. “Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead!” (Eph. 5:14). The night is ending. The day of eternity, promised to the saints who have been awakened by faith in Jesus’ death, is at hand. Father, grant that I put on the Lord Jesus Christ in baptism and faith so that I’ll make no provision for the flesh. Amen.

SCRIPTURE: Jeremiah 33:14-18 A Righteous Branch

Though we pray for “good and faithful rulers,” the Lord causes us to suffer the governance of scoundrels from time to time. Their lack of faith and hostility toward the church tests our faith. The devil wants us to break under their pressure. As it was for the denizens of Jerusalem under their last unbelieving kings, so we also must learn from the prophet to put our trust in the right place. The Righteous Branch has come. He is with us now. He will come again. Though the world’s justice might be broken, our justification before God has been made perfect through the Branch’s blood and intercession. The Branch, Jesus Himself, is the heavenly righteousness of the saints who trust in Him. Grant me to dwell securely in Your salvation, O Lord. Amen.


Faith isn’t having mixed feelings about what may or may not be true. It’s the “assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen” (Heb. 11:1). St. Luke wrote his gospel to give the conviction that historical events that you didn’t see are true. He wrote it to build a foundation for saving faith in Christ. The miraculous events might seem beyond the capacity of rational people to fully accept, but that half-heartedness has no place in God’s presence. To teach the true humility of faith that receives the Word with joy, Gabriel struck Zechariah mute. Better to lose our tongues and bodies in this life than to lose our souls by their lack of faith in hell. O Lord, strengthen my certainty in Your mercy through the gift of the Spirit in the Gospel. Amen.

SCRIPTURE: Colossians 1:12-23 From the Domain of Darkness to the Kingdom of His Beloved Son

These words are too high for us. And yet, these same words must be engraved on our hearts, committed to memory, and spoken out loud often for our comfort. Jesus is the “icon,” the visible image of the almighty God. But He’s no empty projection or mere representation of God. “All things were created through Him and for Him.” Nor is He a lesser god. As is true only of God, “He is before all things.” We’re right to assert, “In Him the fulness of God was pleased to dwell.” Through His flesh born in time, through Christ’s suffering and death, the infinite and immortal God “reconciled to Himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of His cross.” Grant me to continue in this faith, stable and steadfast, O Lord. Amen.

SCRIPTURE: Psalm 143 In Your Faithfulness Answer Me

The 143rd Psalm is a prayer for spiritual peace in times of cross and trial. At the beginning and end of prayer, you encounter these curious phrases that are unlike the language we use among one another. “In Your faithfulness, answer me!” “For Your name’s sake, O Lord, preserve my life! In Your righteousness bring my soul out of trouble!” David isn’t looking to cut a deal with God. He’s casting himself completely on God and His grace. God’s faithfulness, name, and righteousness give David the courage to demand deliverance. His sins ought to shame him into silence. But he knows the Lord’s love. He knows God’s faithfulness to His Word. He knows that his righteousness is not of works, but of faith. Answer me quickly, O Lord! Amen.

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