PRAY THE PSALM OF THE WEEK Psalm 27:1-2, 3-5
The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?*
The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?
When the wicked came against me,*
my enemies and foes, they stumbled and fell.
Though an army may encamp against me,*
my heart shall not fear;
though war should rise against me,*
in this I will be confident.
One thing I have desired of the Lord, that will I seek:* that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, for in the time of trouble He shall hide me in His pavilion:* he shall set me high upon a rock.

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 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.
This week we are reminded of all it means when Jesus tells us to be merciful. We are reminded that His mercy takes away our sins and makes us perfect. His mercy warrants our praise. And His mercy moves us to show mercy to others. We show this mercy not in simple empty works, but by showing true love first to our brothers and sisters in Christ as well as to the neighbor that God has given us to serve.

Have you ever seen a Scripture verse so often and misused so often that you almost disregard it entirely? This text is certainly a candidate for that treatment! Nonetheless, these are the words of our Lord Jesus Christ. The judgment that our Lord is forbidding us from engaging in is the judgment of a person’s salvation. We must be wise and recognize evil in our world and evil in actions. But we ought not be about telling people that they are condemned. Rather, as disciples of Jesus, we speak about the mercy that is available to all in Christ Jesus and the wonderful gift that is. Dear merciful Lord, please help me to speak of Your mercy and to be merciful as You have shown me mercy. Amen.

All the Psalmist desires comes only as the result of God’s work. There is beauty. The Psalmist devotes himself to God’s Law but pleads that God would teach him the Law and the commands. I am reminded of the man who said to Jesus, “Lord I believe, help my unbelief!” We saw yesterday that we have a merciful God. We ought not think that we must have our lives in perfect order to be worthy of God. We throw ourselves at His feet, and in His mercy and His love He does teaches us. He cares for us and feeds us. Our Lord Jesus Christ gives us all that He requires of us. Merciful Lord, my soul melts in sorrow of my sins and my failings. Thank You for Your forgiveness. Please give me Your mercy that I may trust in You for my life. Amen.

I have often been told that getting old is not for the faint of heart. The aches, pains, and ailments that set in as our bodies age can be difficult to bear. Though I have never given birth, I have been in the room when it was happening and seen the pain. In the same way, the whole of creation groans with us. Not under the suffering of physical ailment, but under the weight of sin. We all ache for the day when all is set right. In Christ we know that life without groaning awaits us. This life is ours already, but we will see it and have it in fullness when our Lord returns. Until then, we wait in eager expectation. Merciful Lord, through faith I know that You have forgiven me. Keep me in this faith until the day of Your glorious appearing. Amen.

Note the occasion for this Psalm: the Sabbath. It was meant to be sung in the context of Israel’s worship. And why did they worship? Why did they raise voices in praise? Because of what God had done! Because of His great works of mercy, steadfast love, and faithfulness. For these things, God’s people rejoice. We continue to rejoice even though we see our enemies succeed in this life. We know that we are planted in God’s kingdom. No matter what happens in this life, we will stand with the Lord of Life on the Last Day. What better reason is there than this to rejoice in His mercy shown to us and to gather together with His people to worship? Merciful Lord, Your steadfast love for me brings me great joy and comfort. Grant that I may join with Your people to worship You again and again throughout my life. Amen.

Our Lord Jesus Christ has broken our yokes of slavery to sin. He has given us the gift of forgiveness and eternal life. In this text, we see the call for His people to respond to His mercy by showing mercy to those around them, particularly the poor. This is something that can look different for different Christians. Those in a city can roll down their window at an intersection and give money to someone. Those in a small town can assist local organizations to help the needy. But notice that in this text we are called to do more than throw money at people. True mercy is shown in actually caring for people. God didn’t throw money at us, but truly shows us mercy and care. Merciful Lord, please help me to show Your mercy to those neighbors that You have given me who need aid. Amen.

Jesus shows us today how merciful we should be. How much should we love our neighbor? We should be perfect. What an impossible standard Jesus set for us! We know this to be impossible and yet Jesus speaks this way. Why? Because He wants us to see the value and the importance of showing true love to our neighbors, including especially those who are hard to love. There are those in our lives that are almost impossible to love. But then we remember what kind of love Jesus has for us His sacrificial love set us to try one more time to love our neighbor. Our love comes as a response to what Jesus has done for us first. Loving Lord, I want to show Your love to the world. Help me to see the love You have given me that I may show it to others in word and deed. Amen.

We all have that one friend or person at church: the one who just doesn’t quite have it together. You’ve done things for them again and again. You’ve shown them how to do it and still they can’t figure it out. Exhausting, right? But St. Paul reminds us the importance of bearing with our brothers and sisters in Christ. We ought not stand in judgment, but patiently show them mercy and continue to walk with them as we walk together in the light of Christ. We are called to focus on Him rather than the shortcomings of each other. Merciful Lord, You have shown me such great patience in my own sinfulness. Please help me show patient mercy to those who have also been called into Your Church that we may walk together in love. Amen.

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