PRAY THE PSALM OF THE WEEK Psalm 13:5-6, 1-4

O Lord, I have trusted in Your mercy;
my heart shall rejoice in Your salvation.
I will sing to the Lord,*
because He has dealt bountifully with me. (Psalm 13:5-6)
How long, O Lord? Will You forget me forever?*
How long will You hide Your face from me?
How long shall I take counsel in my soul,*
how long will my enemy be exalted over me?
Consider and hear me, O Lord my God;*
enlighten my eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death;
lest my enemy say, “I have prevailed against him”;*
lest those who trouble me rejoice when I am moved.

BLESS YOURSELF WITH THE HOLY CROSS

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 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.

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 Spirit’s Words in Holy Scripture

The Spirit has been poured out for us (liturgically speaking) on the Day of Pentecost a few weeks ago. We have confessed the Spirit—given truth of the Holy Trinity on Trinity Sunday. And now this week we embrace and confess the Holy Spirit as given to us Christians through the Holy Scriptures. Through the Bible, God speaks to His people and gives to them what they need for their Christian life—the Law and the Gospel. These words are Spirit and life.

SUN


The rich man wanted to give his pagan brothers a spiritual experience they wouldn’t forget. He begs Father Abraham to send Lazarus to his brothers that they would see him and repent of their sins, like unto Jacob Marley appearing to Ebenezer Scrooge in Dickens’ *A Christmas Carol*. But Father Abraham shows the rich man and us where the power of God is present to convert—Moses and the Prophets, the Holy Scriptures. Unless the brothers hear the Bible they will not be convinced “even if someone should rise from the dead.” So with us. Let us hear God’s Word and what it says about us that we would believe on Him Who is risen from the dead. *Lord Jesus, give to us Your Word of life that we may live.* Amen.

MON


Zechariah’s prophetic song, often called the Benedictus, is prayed among us in the morning at Matins or at Lauds. It is well that we take Zechariah’s words upon our lips. In keeping with our theme this week, we pray and confess that God has “spoken by the mouth of His holy prophets [the Bible] that we should be saved from our enemies.” But what enemies? A few verses later, we hear that salvation will be given us “in the forgiveness of sins.” John would bear witness to Christ, the Lamb of God who would take away the sin of the world. That is the Word. He has defeated your enemies, sin, death and the devil. No one can accuse you. And so we sing “Blessed be the Lord…” *Father, keep this song upon the lips of Your Church always.* Amen.

TUE

SCRIPTURE: 1 John 4:16-21 – God is Love

“We love because He first loved us.” Man cannot love in truth without the love of God. All the affection that we may have for even our family is incomplete without the righteousness of faith. For the love of God, received by faith, perfects the love we have for God and for each other “that we may have confidence in the day of judgement.” (vs. 17). To be certain, our love is not outwardly perfect in ourselves this side of glory, but because of the confidence we have in Christ Jesus, Who has forgiven our sins and brought us into His kingdom through His sacrifice and resurrection, we do and can love one another. We love because He first loved us. *Lord Jesus, forgive me my sins and help me by Your Spirit to love You and my brother.* Amen.

WED


We sinful men take great stock in our abilities and assets. We pride ourselves in how smart, winsome, strong, or clever we think we are, and believe others should honor us because of them too. At our most crass, we even believe that God delights in us because of these things, that they prove God’s delight for us. Or, on the other hand, we might think a lack of these things prove God’s displeasure in us. Both of these notions are simply self-worship. What delights God? What should a man boast in? “That he understands and knows [God]…who practices steadfast love, justice and righteousness in the earth.” Which is to say, God delights that men know and call upon His name in faith. *Lord God, I trust in You. May I never boast in anything save Your Name. Amen.*

THU


Our Lord demonstrates the futility of the way we sinners think. Richness in the world’s terms involves ample money and goods, time to relax, eat, drink and be merry. These things are not bad in themselves, indeed the Christian has good cause to be at peace, and receive God’s gifts with thanksgiving. But for that soul that has not faith in the God of mercy, the gifts of this creation are turned into goods in and of themselves, apart from their gracious Giver. And on the day that our souls are required of us, what good are these things? No, we must trust in Jesus and His mercy, for only in His forgiveness can we have eternal salvation and true peace both now and in eternity. *Lord Jesus, make me seek the higher things, that I may be with You.* Amen.

FRI

SCRIPTURE: 1 Timothy 6:6-19 – Contentment

This reading is related to the one from yesterday where we encountered the folly of the rich fool, who trusted in his riches for his security. Here, Paul teaches Pastor Timothy the same thing—namely, that he should instruct his congregation not only to pursue godliness through faith in Christ, but also contentment with what they have. For the desire to be rich in material things may cause Christians to wander away from the faith or be pierced with many pangs (vs. 10). God would have us not seek after wealth but be content with what we have, losing wealth just as easily as we receive it, trusting not in our own wealth, but in the wealth we have laid up in heaven with God. *Lord Jesus, make me a humble and content servant.* Amen.

SAT

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 16:13-20 – Who Do You Say That I Am?

The Father reveals the Son, in the power of the Spirit, through the word of God. When St. Peter makes his great confession upon which the Church would be built “you are the Christ, the Son of the living God” Jesus reveals to him and to us that this confession did not originate in Peter. He did not come to this confession by process of elimination, or through the penetrating philosophies of men. He was able to confess the Christ because the Father in heaven revealed it to him. So it is today. The Father reveals the Son in the power of the Spirit, through the Word of God as read and preached into your ears. Take heed of the Word, and by faith, you too, like St. Peter, are accounted as blessed. *Lord Jesus, give to us Your Word always.* Amen.

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