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 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 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.

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.

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.

[Jesus] said to him, “If they do not hear Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be convinced if someone should rise from the dead.”
Around the Word Devotions + the week of June 3-9, 2018

THEME OF THE WEEK: The Spirit’s Words in Holy Scripture

The Holy Spirit comforts sinners by making the mysteries of the Holy Trinity known, especially the conversation between the Father and Son who continually converse about your salvation. The Holy Spirit publishes these conversations in Scripture. Jesus insists that unless you receive this Spirit-filled Word by faith, then no number of signs, proofs, testimonials, or experiences will convince you to repent. The Word alone has the promise of being the Spirit’s voice. Where the prophets, apostles, and evangelists continue to preach, God breathes His life into sinners’ dead souls. He revives them with His promises of mercy for Jesus’ sake.

What happens when I die? Will I float around like a ghost? Will I cease to exist? How do I avoid hell and get into heaven? Jesus answers these questions in His story about Lazarus. This isn’t a ghost story. At the moment of death, the angels take the Christian’s soul to heaven. The man who worships money suffers hell. The difference is based on faith. The rich man begs Abraham to send a resurrected Lazarus to convince his five brothers to repent. But faith doesn’t come by seeing. “They have Moses and the Prophets” Abraham says. “Let them hear them.” Indeed! Dear Lord, by Your Spirit grant me faith to hear Moses and the Prophets as they comfort with the forgiveness of sins and eternal life for Christ’s sake. Amen.

The Holy Spirit makes us holy from baptism to the moment of death, not just when we first hear and believe the Gospel. The Scriptures are His means to accomplish sanctification. You’re never going to outgrow them. The Bible, the Spirit’s voice, unfolds the majesty of God’s heart by teaching Law and Gospel. For the saints, the Spirit redeems God’s Law and shows that works done according to the commandments are like jewels that adorn the white garments of Christ’s righteousness. All of this is to say that only a Christian, whose conscience has been set free by the forgiveness of sins, who is saved by faith, can pray Psalm 119 and mean it. Bless me and make my way blameless, O Lord, that I may delight in Your commandments. Amen.

SCRIpTUrE: 1 John 4:16-21 “God is Love”
The simplicity and beauty of St. John’s sermon mocks the speculative games that the theologians are tempted to play. What’s required of a Christian isn’t that he arrives at a pure definition of God’s being or articulates the involatile proof of God’s existence. It’s that he repeats the child-like phrases of the Bible which teach God’s love for the world through His Son. When we trust that Jesus has died for us, we gain confidence for the day of judgment. Faith casts out any fear of that day. What’s to fear? We are baptized. Fear of this world tempts us with hate and envy. But knowing Jesus’ forgiveness teaches us to love even as God first loved us. Grant me faith in Your love, O Lord, that my conscience may be clean and confident for the day of judgement. Amen.

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Wisdom, strength, and riches. These are more noble idols than the crass statues to Baal or Dagon, but they’re idols nonetheless. As the first commandment teaches, a false god is anything that misplaces our fear, love, and trust. Not only do idols demand false faith, they require a kind of liturgical worship through our boasting. Boasting in carved images is silly. But boasting in wisdom? What’s wrong with that? Dear saint, the wisdom, strength, and riches of man ultimately fail. They neither save from sin nor resurrect from the dead. Jesus alone saves you. He forgives your sins and gives you hope. If you’re going to boast, boast in our Lord who “practices steadfast love, justice, and righteousness in the earth.” I boast in Your mercy, O Lord. Amen.

What kind of man would ask our Redeemer to settle some petty score between him and his brother? We might be indignant, but our hearts are often just as twisted withainties to mammon. Covetousness and the abundance of possessions demand worry and fear. They promise ease and comfort if we succeed in acquiring that magic amount which is just out of reach. Even if we do obtain everything we desire, what then? Jesus says to “watch out” since our souls might be demanded of us at any moment. What becomes of the world then? It’s lost to us. Jesus gives you greater and lasting treasures. He gives you resurrection and eternal life. Hear His word. Find your comfort there. Grant me faith to treasure Your mercy, O Lord. Amen.

SCRIpTUrE: 1 Timothy 6:6-19 “Rich in Christ and Good Works”
Be rich in good works, not in stuff. Money isn’t the root of evil, but loving it is. This misplaced love can trap your heart. St. Paul explains that even though some possessed the greater gifts of the Holy Spirit and eternal life, their flesh betrayed them. They judged the wealth of this bodily life to be more important. They wandered away. “But as for you, O man of God, flee these things.” Learn from the Scriptures to treasure Jesus and the saving trust that is already yours through Baptism. Make the good confession. Take hold of eternal life. The Lord may yet bless you with riches. God can make us rich or poor in a day. O Lord, teach me to set my hope in Your mercy given me through Christ. Amen.

SCRIpTUrE: Psalm 34 “Not One of Them is Broken”
This psalm preaches the crucifixion and Christian comfort. Jesus, in verse 19, is called “the Righteous.” Despite His sufferings of body and soul, His heavenly Father vindicated His Son’s atonement. He preserved His body from destruction, kept all His bones from being broken (John 19:36), and resurrected His Son on the 3rd day. Christ’s vindication is now your own. God’s love for you, bought with the priceless treasure of His Son’s blood, is established forever. Nothing can undo Jesus’ cross or resurrection. You are the Lord’s servant. He has put His name on you in Baptism. Boast in the Lord, O saint! “The Lord redeems the life of his servants: none of those who take refuge in him will be condemned.” Thanks be to You, O Lord, for my redemption. Amen.

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