
My eyes are ever toward the Lord,*
for He shall pluck my feet out of the net.
Turn Yourself to me, and have mercy on me,*
for I am desolate and afflieted.
To You, O Lord, I lift up my soul.*
O my God, I trust in You; let me not be ashamed;
the troubles of my heart have enlarged;*
bring me out of my distresses!
Look on my affliction and my pain,*
and forgive all my sins.
Keep my soul, and deliver me;*
let me not be ashamed, for I put my trust in You.

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.
Around the Word Devotions + the week of March 15-21, 2020

THEME OF THE WEEK: He Suffered the Opposition of Hell

“God’s Word is our great heritage and shall be ours forever.” So we sing, for God’s Word is the great treasure which is given to us in order to fight against every foe, every temptation, and every danger. It casts out demons, it brings us into all truth, it shines light in darkness, it draws us out of the grave, it is the source of our confidence, our hope, and our praise. In God’s Word we have the promise that we will be given again on the Last Day the privilege to eat from the tree of life and dwell with God for eternity, with sin, death, and devil having been destroyed. All this is ours because of the great power of God’s Holy Word, our great heritage.

SCRIPTURE: Luke 11:14-28 — Those Who are Blessed

“Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and keep it!” All things in this text (and all of Scripture) are oriented toward this point: those who hear and keep God’s Word are the ones who are truly blessed. It is God’s Word, which is the power by which the Lord drives out the demons. It’s the Lord’s Word, which is inscribed on the tablets of stone and which now fights against the demons of Beelzebul. It’s the Lord’s Word, which rescues us from the devil’s house. It’s the Lord’s Word, which declares us to be more blessed even than Mary, who bore the Son of God. No matter the blessing, none is better than hearing and holding onto God’s Word, for it alone brings salvation. Lord, bless my hearing and keeping of Your Word. Amen.

SCRIPTURE: Psalm 43 — The Word that Stands against Our Enemies

The psalmist prays (and teaches us to pray) against all who would cause us harm. At the center of the prayer is that the Lord would send His light and truth, that is, that He would send us His Holy Word, in order to guide us, both away from our enemies and toward His Church. Through God’s Word, the Lord stands as our refuge in every time of trouble, even against the great adversaries of death and devil. Through the Lord’s Word we stand in confidence before the Altar of God as He comes to serve us with His gifts of salvation, life, and forgiveness. Therefore, every hope we have stands firm in the promises given to us through His Word. Lord, grant to us every blessing through Your Word. Amen.

SCRIPTURE: Ephesians 5:1-9 — Words which Drive Away Darkness

As Christians we have been called by the Lord’s Word out of the darkness of sin, and into the light of Christ. St. Paul therefore bids us to live, no longer in the darkness, but in the light, as children of the light. In this life, however, there is much temptation to continue in darkness, and especially to listen to the words of darkness, or, as St. Paul phrases it, “empty words.” While these words sound good initially, they are in the end, nothing but emptiness, darkness, and death. We ignore those words and instead continue in the words which illuminate our path, guide our footsteps, and keep us in Christ’s eternal light, which chases away all darkness. Lord, keep us always in the light of Your Holy Word. Amen.

SCRIPTURE: 2 Samuel 22:1-7 — The Word that Conquers Death

When David is spared from the hand of his enemies, he sings this great song of praise to the Lord. We learn here, that we too may sing songs of praise to God. The same enemies from which the Lord spared David, He has spared us from also. Particularly, David thanks God for being spared from death and the fear of death: “For the waves of death encompassed me...the snares of death confronted me.” We too must come face to face with death, and the devil uses that reality to drive us to despair. But the Lord brings the comfort of His word in the face of death, showing us the greater reality that Christ has broken its bars and freed us from being captive to it. Lord, let me never fear my death since You have conquered it by Yours. Amen.

SCRIPTURE: John 8:42-51 — The Word of Truth and Life

Jesus calls the devil the father of those fighting against Him. But’s the devil is more than that. He is the father of lies, the father of death, the one who does not stand in the truth. And here we ought to understand how all of this stems from him fighting against the Lord’s Word. To be severed from the Word is to be severed from the truth, and from life itself (as happened to Adam and Eve). To believe the word of the devil is to believe a lie. Though the devil is indeed a powerful foe, that which he fights against is his undoing. Jesus says, “If anyone keeps My word, he will never see death.” In the Word we have that which saves us from every attack the devil would send our way. Lord, keep us steadfast in Your Word. Amen.

SCRIPTURE: Revelation 2:1-7 — The Tree of Promise

The tree of life appears in the opening chapters of Genesis with the promise that whoever eats of it shall live forever. However, after the fall, the tree disappears from the narrative of God’s Word, until Revelation. Here, we are shown the great promise, that the tree is not, gone, but waiting for us in the great resurrection. “To the one who conquers I will grant to eat of the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.” As St. Paul reminds us in Romans, we are more than conquerors through Christ, who has loved us and given His life for us. In Christ we are declared to have conquered sin, death, and devil by His blood, and so we look forward to again being given to eat and so live with God for eternity. Lord, thank You for the victory in Your death. Amen.

SCRIPTURE: Psalm 86 — Words which are Heard and Answered

David teaches us why we pray with all boldness and confidence to the Lord. It is because He promises to hear us and answer us, not only in good times, but also and especially in times of distress. When the devil comes and tempts us to despair, to think that the world will win in its battle against us, to think that our sin is too great to be forgiven, to think that the grave will be our final destination, the Lord reminds us through the truth of His Word that He preserves our life. He fights against all our adversaries and He forgives all our sins through the precious blood of Christ. He has, in Christ and His death, given us the greatest sign of His favor toward us, and reminded us that we always have His help and comfort. Lord, hear my prayer and answer me. Amen.

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