BLESS YOURSELF WITH THE HOLY CROSS AND SAY:

In the name of the Father and 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 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.
This text is describing how God’s people will react when they return home from exile. While we may not experience the terror or sorrow of being exiled from our lands, we still understand the wrath of God and His judgment against sin. We understand those things because we understand the cross of Christ and what Jesus accomplished for us there. Because of Jesus, we too are able to be thankful and to praise God because of the salvation we have received. The judgment against our sin has already been suffered by our Lord in our place and so we can rejoice in the kingdom of God. O Lord, I thank You for sparing me Your judgment and for giving me Christ who has suffered in my place and redeemed me from death that I may be Your servant eternally. Amen.

**John 8:21-36 – Judgmental Jesus?**

We don’t expect Jesus to talk like this. Jesus is supposed to be nice and kind. He is not supposed to tell people that they will die in their sins. Yet that is exactly what we see in this text today. The judgement of Jesus stands against those who reject Him. But at the same time, we see in this text Jesus telling those who believe in Him that He will save them too. This is the other side of the coin of judgment. Those who are in Christ do not receive the punishment that they deserve, but instead are given life. It is good for us to be reminded sometimes of the true nature of what we have been saved from. We have been saved from a wrath that we deserve because of our own actions. But in Christ, we are forgiven. O Lord, I thank You for the salvation that You have given me in Jesus. Keep me in this faith that I may remain in Your grace. Amen.

**2 Corinthians 5:14-21 – We are a New Creation**

This text brings home what we have been seeing this week in the Scriptures. Jesus became sin for us. He took the punishment that we deserve. The judgment of God against sin is resolved in Christ. The Father’s wrath against our sin is poured out onto Jesus. For those who are in Christ then, the issue is resolved. We are a new creation. We are made something new because of the working of God on our behalf through the Holy Spirit. It is by faith that this salvation, that was won by Jesus at the cross, becomes our salvation. Thanks be to God that we are made new! O Lord, I praise You for making me a new creation. Please ensure that Your work for my salvation is ever before my eyes. Amen.

**Psalm 126 – The Lord Has Done Great Things**

As we close this week, I encourage you to reflect on what the nature of God’s judgment is. It is not simply God “being mean.” It is the righteous creator of the universe condemning that which is evil and corrupting. It is something that you have been spared from in Jesus. As we read this Psalm, we see that God’s people rejoice in the aftermath of judgment. Even after God has disciplined His people, they still rejoice over all the good that He has done for them. In the same way, even in these days when so many have mourned and may still be mourning God’s righteous discipline, we can still reflect on all the great things our God has done for us. O Lord, I praise You for sparing me Your wrath. O Lord, I thank You for the salvation that You have given me in Jesus. O Lord, please give me the ears to hear these around me that I may better understand my neighbor and thereby not respond in anger to him. Amen.

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**Psalm 125 – We thank You for Your blessings**

The joy of my heart is Your salvation. It is a source of comfort in the midst of suffering because we know that God is the one who can bring us back from despair. O Lord, please give me the ears to hear these around me that I may better understand my neighbor and thereby not respond in anger to him. Amen.

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**Luke 5:10 – All will be saved**

This text brings home what we have been seeing this week in the Scriptures. Jesus became sin for us. He took the punishment that we deserve. The judgment of God against sin is resolved in Christ. The Father’s wrath against our sin is poured out onto Jesus. For those who are in Christ then, the issue is resolved. We are a new creation. We are made something new because of the working of God on our behalf through the Holy Spirit. It is by faith that this salvation, that was won by Jesus at the cross, becomes our salvation. Thanks be to God that we are made new! O Lord, I praise You for making me a new creation. Please ensure that Your work for my salvation is ever before my eyes. Amen.

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