PRAY THE PSALM OF THE WEEK  Prayer of Azariah 1:4, 7, 20, 19; Psalm 48:1, 9-11
The Lord is righteous in all His works toward us,* for we have not obeyed His commandments.
Glorify Your Name, O Lord:* and deal with us according to Your great mercy.
Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised* in the city of our God, in His holy mountain.
We have thought, O God, on Your loving kindness,* in the midst of Your temple.
According to Your name, O God,* so is Your praise to the ends of the earth; Your right hand is full of righteousness.*
Let Mount Zion rejoice, Because of Your judgments.

BLESS YOURSELF WITH THE HOLY CROSS AND SAY:
In the name of the Father and of 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.
THEME OF THE WEEK: Resisting the Flesh at Home in the World

The Lord, in His mercy, continues to call, over and over again, those who do not deserve to be called. He calls those along the highway to the banquet. He calls us out of the darkness and death of our sin. He calls those who do not ask or seek. He calls evangelists such as St. Luke. He calls the gentiles. He calls those who were once far off. And, in His continued mercy, He calls you. He has promised to send you His Word. He delivers, redeems, and grants life to you, His dear child. All of this He does, only out of His divine, fatherly goodness, and apart from any merit or worthiness in any of us.

**SCRIPTURE:** Matthew 22:1-14: Made Worthy through His Call

"Those who were invited were not worthy." In times past, the Lord called His people, the Israelites, to be faithful to Him and His Word. But that people continued to ignore His Word. The Lord therefore extends His call to those outside the nation of Israel. He sends Christians out to the ends of the earth to call as many as can be found to come and join the Lord at the great wedding banquet prepared in honor of His Son, our Lord Jesus. This banquet awaits us all, who trust in His Word and heed His call to gather in the wedding hall as His guests. 

_Blessed Lord, thank You for calling me to the wedding banquet. May I always be found wearing Your wedding garment. Amen._

**SCRIPTURE:** Psalm 119:153-160: God's Eternal Promises

In the midst of our sin, our affliction, and the persecutions from those who hate the Lord, our God continues to care for us, His Christians. He delivers us from our enemies. He redeems us from our sin and death. He gives life through His Word and Sacraments. All this He does (not because we deserve it or because we've earned it or because we're good) because of His steadfast love. He's bound Himself to the promises of His Word. His Word of promise endures forever and is always there for us to grab ahold of, so that we can call upon God in every trouble and trust Him to answer in whatever way is best. 

_Lord, thank You for Your promises to redeem, deliver, and bring me to life. May I always trust in them. Amen._

**SCRIPTURE:** Ephesians 5:15-21: Sins Brought into the Light

The devil wants us to keep our sins hidden and secret. He wants us not to call them by name and confess them. By doing this they are kept in the dark, out of the light of the world, but also out of the light of forgiveness. But Jesus would have us confess our sins, to name them, and bring them into the light. By the light of Christ our sins are made visible. What makes us dead in our trespasses is forgiven by the Word of Christ as our pastor speaks it to us: "I forgive you your sins". From that forgiveness our Lord Jesus raises us from death to live as His people. Being alive, having heard the word of the Gospel, we walk in His wisdom and truth. 

_Lord Jesus, may I ever, by Your aid, confess my sins and live in Your forgiveness. Amen._

**SCRIPTURE:** Romans 11:25-32: Made Part of God’s People

“A partial hardening has come upon Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.” The people of Israel refused to heed God’s call to repentance, and so He hardened their hearts to hearing His Word. At the same time, the Lord extended the call of the Gospel to all nations. Even though we were also found in our sin and disobedience, the Lord, in His mercy, called us by His Word to repentance and faith. St. Paul tells us that this is so God’s plan, that all would be saved and come to a full knowledge of the truth, would come to pass. God has issued the call. It cannot be withdrawn. His mercy is for all people, for all time, forever. 

_Lord, thank You for making me a member of Your people through the church. Amen._

**SCRIPTURE:** Psalm 57: Praise for God’s Mercy

We have seen it in the texts this week. The Lord’s mercy, love, and forgiveness to us is boundless. He calls us who should not have been called. He loves us, who are His enemies. He has mercy where none is deserved. And for all of this, we learn from David in this psalm that our response is two-fold: first, we thank and praise Him for His kindness. We sing to Him. We tell others of His goodness. Second, we pray that God would continue to give us more. More mercy. More forgiveness. More of what He has already promised and already given, life and salvation. And our Lord, Who hears that prayer, delights to give us more, for He is merciful. 

_Lord, thank You for Your mercy. May my cup always be overflowing with it. Amen._

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