PRAY THE PSALM OF THE WEEK  Psalm 74:1-2, 19, 20-23

Have respect to Your covenant, O Lord;* oh, do not let the oppressed turn ashamed!
Arise, O God, plead / Your own cause;* do not forget the voice of Your enemies.
O God, why have You cast us off for ever,* Why does Your anger smoke against the sheep of Your pasture?
Remember Your congregation,* which You have pursued of old,
The tribe of Your inheritance, which You have redeemed—* this Mount Zion where / You have dwelt.
Do not forget the life of Your poor forever.* Let the poor and needy praise Your name.

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.
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.

1. O God, Thou faithful God, Thou Fountain ever flowing, Who good and perfect gifts In mercy art bestowing, Give me a healthy frame, And may I have within A conscience free from blame, A soul unhurt by sin!

2. Grant Thou me strength to do With ready heart and willing Whate’er Thou shalt command, My calling here fulfilling; To do it when I ought, With all my might, and bless The work I thus have wrought, For Thou must give success.
THEME OF THE WEEK: Believing Love of All Others

“Love” can be a hard word to define. Often times God, Who is love, is accused of being unloving. Inspired by Satan, the world offers definitions of love that appeal to our sinful flesh. These myths, lies, and speculations can leave us confused, especially when considered apart from the Word of God. Still, our Lord calls us to love. He first gives His love to us as He sent His Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins (1 John 4:10). Having received His love, we are given to respond in love. Baptized into Jesus’ death and resurrection, our desire is to give of ourselves, to follow His Law, His Way, that we may be blessed and be a blessing unto our neighbors.


What do I have to do to justify myself, to earn the Lord’s favor, to inherit eternal life? Love God with all your heart, soul, and strength and love your neighbor as yourself. In other words, keep the Ten Commandments perfectly. Sound daunting? It should. Our selfish ambitions are crushed by the demands of God’s Law. There is nothing we can do to “inherit” life. Someone else must die in sacrifice for our sins (1 John 4:10). Having received His love, we are given to proclaim the curse of death to the transgressor. Why? “So that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe.” The Law was given, in order to fully appreciate His Word and rejoice in His way, we respectfully ask, “Why then the Law?” The Law was added because of sin. It was given to pronounce the curse of death to the transgressor. Why? “So that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe.” The Law was given to weep that we might despair of our works that lead to death and receive by faith the promise of God (the Gospel) which leads to life everlasting. Lord, may Your Law continue to expose my sin that my faith may be rooted in Your promise of salvation through the offspring of Abraham, Jesus Christ.

SCRIPTURE: Galatians 3:15-22 “Why then the law?”

Our inheritance, the forgiveness of sins, righteousness, and salvation, does not come through the Law. Yet, the Law is a part of God’s Word given to us. In order to fully appreciate His Word and rejoice in His way, we respectfully ask, “Why then the Law?” The Law was added because of sin. It was given to pronounce the curse of death to the transgressor. Why? “So that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe.” The Law was given so that we might despair of our works that lead to death and receive by faith the promise of God (the Gospel) which leads to life everlasting. Lord, may Your Law continue to expose my sin that my faith may be rooted in Your promise of salvation through the offspring of Abraham, Jesus Christ.

SCRIPTURE: Psalm 119:97-104 (MEM) “Oh how I love Your law.”

The Good Samaritan is our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, who has given us new life through His sacrifice on the cross. Baptized into His death, we are set free from the demands of the Law. Raised up with Him we are given newness of life; a new understanding. In Christ, we now see God’s Law as a blessing, rather than a burden. With the Psalmist, we rejoice in His commandments. They make us wise. We recognize the evil in the deceptions of the world and in our flesh and by the Holy Spirit we hate these false ways. In faith, we understand that His Way is the Way of life. Heavenly Father, keep us steadfast in Your Word and increase in us a desire to follow Your precepts, that our lives may be blessed and that we may be a blessing unto our neighbors. Amen.

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 20:20-28 “What do you want?”

The mother of James and John hoped to secure prestigious seats for her sons in the Kingdom. Today, we too, aspire to seats of power, control, and prestige. Often times we might even feel that we deserve such seats of honor. The Kingdom that our Lord ushers in does not follow the rules of earthly kingdoms. Greatness comes not through power and control, but rather, through giving of self for the benefit of others. Jesus took the lowliest of seats as He was lifted up on the cross in order that we might be granted entrance to the banquet table of the Kingdom. We, who have been given His all, are called to greatness by following Him, in serving and giving of ourselves. Lord, move us to sacrifice of ourselves and so reflect the greatness of Your Kingdom. Amen.

SCRIPTURE: 1 Timothy 1:5-17 “The aim of our charge is love.”

What is the source of Christian love? St. Paul writes, “love issues from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.” Already in Paul’s time, this foundation was under attack. He cautions that there are alternate teachings, myths, and speculations floating around that can lead people away from the love of God in Christ Jesus. In the face of these false teachings, we are called to be stewards of God by faith, messengers of the Truth, the Gospel of Christ. Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the foremost. Here we have the true source of love. The aim of our charge is to spread the overflowing love He has given us by grace. Lord, may Your faith-creating love continue to fill me that I may share it to Your glory. Amen.

SCRIPTURE: Psalm 84 “My soul longs for the courts of the Lord.”

Our Lord gathers His people, He draws them unto Himself. Trusting in His love for us, revealed to us in Christ Jesus, our Lord, we long for the comfort of His presence; we are drawn to His sanctuary. There we receive our strength. Gathered together in His house, we build one another up as our hearts sing for joy to the living God. In His courts, we pray that the Lord would hear our prayer for the sake of our shield, Jesus Christ. The Lord answers our prayers. He bestows favor, honor, and blessing to those who trust in the life giving sacrifice of His Son on the cross for us. Heavenly Father, preserve me from the tents of wickedness and increase and sustain my zeal to approach You in Your house where I would be blessed to serve You as doorkeeper. Amen.

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