

Monday July 27, 2020

Read Psalm 1

His Delight

Delight is not one of those words that is used a great deal, and that's a good thing. Delight is unique, special. For something to be your delight carries the notion of bringing you absolute joy. You just can't get enough of whatever it is that brings you delight. I think about when my kids were little, and we would go to the park. They loved to go on the swings, and they loved when Dad would push them. "Higher! Higher!" They would plead while giggling. Wanting more and finding endless joy in it – that's what I think of as delight.

“(Blessed is the man)...his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night.” As we begin reading through the Psalms today, keep in mind that usually **“the law of the Lord”** is a way of talking about all of God's Word. The people of God delight in the words of Scripture. As we pray together through the Psalms over the next number of weeks, I pray that you delight in God's Word – you find yourself wanting more and finding endless joy here. The Psalms are prayers and so run the gamut of human emotion and experience in relationship to God, but the common thread is joy and vitality found in God and His Word.

The one who constantly comes back to God's Word to consider it, repeat it, meditate upon it **“is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither.”** The picture is one of life that is constantly fed and nourished. This is what God does for us and our faith through the Scriptures. We given direction and command. We are given God's promises of rescue that are realized in Jesus' death and resurrection. Through it all, He speaks to deliver the life-giving Word we need. His Word is our delight.

Prayer – Dear Jesus, make Your Word my delight. Help me to meditate day and night on Your promises and find everlasting joy. Amen.

Today's Devotion was written by Pastor Jason

Tuesday July 28, 2020

Read Psalm 2

The Victory is Ours

There is no doubt - as we look out at the world, the powers-that-be assail God and His salvation. They mock God and His people; they defile Christians with their words; they seize the opportunity to restrict worship of the true God; they teach that all we Christians live for is in vain!

Remember, though, that our Lord Jesus prophesied that this would happen! If they would kill Him, what would they do to His followers? Treat them the same, of course. In our Psalm today (Psalm 2), the question is asked? Why do those who hate God plan such useless, empty, vain activities? Do they really think that they can shut down God? But we don't need the answer to those questions! Try what they might - all they end up doing is showing the power of God!

For us, as we see their attempts, even as we feel those attempts in our personal lives, we know that the wilder the rebellion, the stronger the failure. As the psalmist says, God has them in derision. God's friends, us, know that He is always the winner.

So as you read the news, pity those poor deluded wrong doers. Turn from worries, turn to the Savior who has made you His own, promising to be with you and protect you. Look to His guidance in troubled times; depend on His strength for support; make His Words (the Bible) a regular reminder of His will and actions in your life. He promised: **"Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him."**

Prayer: Father in Heaven, it is scary to see the devil's works displayed brazenly in the news. Yet I thank you for the promise that those actions will be in vain. Please, keep my heart and mind on you, trusting in the victory of Your Son, Jesus, my Savior. Amen.

Today's Devotion was written by Pastor Art Bolstad

Wednesday July 29, 2020

Read Psalm 3

Now I Lay Me Down to Sleep

Many a child has said the bedtime prayer: “Now I lay me down to sleep, I pray the Lord my soul to keep. If I should die before I wake, I pray the Lord my soul to take.” The words are spoken by little ones, but the subject matter is quite serious. During the time of sleep, the child is asking for God to protect her soul. Not just her life, but her soul! After all, God alone can do such a thing. Not just this, but even if death should come in the night, she looks forward to everlasting rescue.

Sleep is important. It’s necessary. And it’s also the time when we most recognize our need for divine protection. We are vulnerable, but we are not without the care of our God. David understood this. He wrote Psalm 3 as he fled from Absalom, his rebellious son, who sought to take the throne and even David’s life.

David marvels at the protection he is provided, **“you, O Lord, are a shield about me...I lay down and slept; I woke again, for the Lord sustained me.”** David lived in constant danger, but every night of sleep was a testimony of God’s provision for him. Every morning he opened his eyes from rest became an occasion to praise the Lord who kept him safe while he slept. Yet even if David fell asleep in death, he knew, **“salvation belongs to the Lord; your blessing be on your people!”**

Perhaps these anxious times keep you up at night. David’s words today teach us to return to the bedtime prayer of children – David’s Lord (and our Savior) guards our souls in life and death on account of His defeat of our enemies of sin, death and Satan. We have nothing to fear. At the same time, perhaps you are tempted to greet the morning with contempt, wishing for more rest. A better perspective would be praise to God when the Lord wakes us. After all, He has kept us safe through the night, and by His mercy given us a new day. Luther’s morning prayer was written with just this idea in mind: as the first words to speak each morning.

Luther’s Morning Prayer – 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.

Today’s Devotion was written by Pastor Jason

Thursday July 30, 2020

Read Psalm 4

Dwelling in the LORD's Safety

We can all relate to troubles and troubled relationships. Distress in sufferings of any sort can leave us feeling abandoned and angry, hopeless and despairing, desperate for relief. Many troubles come upon fallen mankind, yet redemption through Jesus Christ has brought us all comfort and hope in troubles and despair, for the shining the light of the LORD's face is upon us richly on account of Christ.

When David continued fleeing from his son Absalom, his troubled heart confidently poured out to the LORD for mercy, **"Answer me when I call, O God of my righteousness! You have given me relief when I was in distress. Be gracious to me and hear my prayer!"**

Notice David trusts in God's promise of relief in distress, certainly trust was not earned or merited by David, rather, given by the shining light and face of the LORD, by His grace and righteousness, His inspired Word and promise bringing us to Himself through faith. As sanctified children of God, like David, we too believe and **"know that the LORD has set apart the godly for himself; the LORD hears when I call to him. Be angry, and do not sin; ponder in your own hearts on your beds, and be silent."** Yikes! Truly this is a struggle for me to not sin in anger, and God's Word always convicts and captures my heart after sin committed in anger toward another person such as harsh words, thoughts, and actions.

We see David repeat and trust in God's Word and promises in prayer, and all of God's house sings hymns, often accompanied **"with stringed instruments,"** proclaiming the righteousness of God. The LORD gives relief in distress and our hearts call out to Him, He causes us to look to the cross where Jesus bled and died and was sacrificed for our sin, giving all of Himself for you, me, and the world, for in Christ alone, we depend and trust in Him whatever the trouble may be, for, **"in peace I will both lie down and sleep; for you alone, O LORD, make me dwell in safety."**

Prayer - O LORD, the light of your face shines upon us, for You have filled our hearts with joy and peace in Jesus Christ given for my sin and salvation forever. Amen.

Today's Devotion was written by Pre-Seminary Student Nathan Tritch

Friday July 31, 2020

Read Psalm 5

Entering the Lord's House

It is a common enough excuse for avoiding worship, even if it is said as a joke. "Pastor, the roof will fall in (or lightning will strike or some other natural disaster will occur), if I go to church." The statement is usually said in jest, but there is something about it that is not a joke at all. Behind this statement is the idea that, "I'm too bad of a sinner to come. The whole place will be judged because of me."

In response to that, I present David. King David was not a particularly great parent, he practiced deception, adultery and ordered a murder to cover-up his wrongdoings. If there ever was a person who should have been concerned that the "roof will fall in if I go," it would have been David.

He seems to know this, but he knew something greater than His sin – God's steadfast love. Pay attention to some of David's words in the middle of Psalm 5, "**I, through the abundance of your steadfast love, will enter your house...lead me in your righteousness.**" David didn't enter the house of the Lord because He was a perfectly upstanding person of impeccable character and virtue. By virtue of his behavior and character, the temple roof would have collapsed. He entered through the abundance of God's steadfast love. That term, "**steadfast love,**" is used some 125 times in Psalms and it always talks about God's steadfast love or as Martin Luther described it, "God's goodness in action."

The truth is that the only way anyone can enter the Lord's house (here on earth or His eternal home in heaven) is because of God's goodness in action through Jesus. In His righteousness, we have been clothed, and so we come humbly knowing that our sin should keep us far from the presence of God. Yet His steadfast love covers our sin and invites to be near to our Lord – in prayer, in His Word, in receiving the Lord's Supper. This humbling truth should lead us to yearn to be in God's house. Even though we don't deserve to be in His presence, His steadfast loves invites and welcomes us in Jesus' name.

Prayer – Lord, thank You for Your goodness in action for me through Jesus. It is truly only through the abundance of Your steadfast love that I can be in Your presence. Amen.

Today's Devotion was written by Pastor Jason

Saturday August 1, 2020

Read Psalm 6

“King David’s Diary”

When you read about the kings of the ancient world, their records don’t tell about their failures. No, like anyone would, they tell about the great battles they won, the love their people have for them, the great buildings and art they constructed. It’s kind of like you or I telling about the fish we caught – we “embellish” the story to show how great we are. It’s only natural.

But not David, King of Israel. You hear him describe, in his own words, how weak he is. He tells of his weariness, his grief, his “troubled bones”. The bed he sleeps in is literally soaked because of the tears he cries. He’s become dead, exhausted, empty. And you and I are reading about this from his “personal diary”, the intimate, personal account of the depths he’s reached – in his own words, by his own pen.

We don’t know what part of his life this is taken from, but even as a young boy David loved and trusted the Lord. When he heard the foul taunts of the giant Goliath, blaspheming God, it felt like an attack on David himself. And David turned to God for wisdom and strength and refused the armor offered him, trusting in God alone for victory. And, even then, David knew God would bless him.

What kind of king writes like this? The kind of king who is overflowing with despair, but knows where to turn. He knows he’s just a man – a sinful man – and that even his kingly might and power can do nothing to save him. And so, he yet again turns to God for relief, comfort, and for life itself. And God hears him, accepts his prayer, and David is saved.

What kind of king writes about his failures? The kind that wants you to know that God loves you, too, and will care for you and comfort you, even in the worst of times. He writes to tell the entire world what a weakling he is, but that, because the Creator and Ruler of the Universe loves him, **“All my enemies shall be ashamed and greatly troubled; they shall turn back and be put to shame in a moment.”**

Prayer - Heavenly Father, when despair fills my soul, send Your Spirit to comfort me. Remind me that I’ve been baptized into Christ and will rise again like Him. In Jesus’ Name, Amen.

Today’s Devotion was written by Pastor Jeff Nelson

Monday August 3, 2020

Read Psalm 7

The Refuge

Where is your refuge? Perhaps your refuge is your home. Maybe your garden is your refuge. Perhaps your refuge is found on a boat out on the middle of a lake. There are many options of places that you might call your refuge, but any true refuge contains two important aspects.

The first aspect is that a refuge is a place of retreat. You can truly get away from it all. Whatever hounds you is held at bay. Whatever stresses press down on you are alleviated. In a refuge, there is peace.

The second aspect is that a refuge is a place of safety from a dangerous world. You are protected in a refuge. No danger can touch you in this place. Whatever difficulty would cause you harm cannot reach you in the refuge.

What a beautiful image then when David proclaims, “**O Lord my God, in you do I take refuge.**” God is our place of retreat. In Him, we find true peace. Through the mercy of Jesus we have peace with God and refuge from everlasting effects of sin. Our hearts are set at peace because Christ has first made peace with us by His blood. What’s more, we have safety from a dangerous world. We may not avoid every danger in this life, but the great dangers of sin and Satan do not have the final say. Christ, our refuge, guards us in His mercy. Trusting in Him, though every good thing of this mortal life be under attack or taken away, our eternal hope and life in Christ remain. And in Christ, our refuge we have peace and protection even when the battle rages around us.

Prayer – O Lord my, in you do I take refuge; save me from all my pursuers and deliver me. Amen.

Today’s Devotion was written by Pastor Jason

Tuesday August 4, 2020

Read Psalm 8

True Wonder

We are the generation that looks to the stars, expecting to visit them - or at least watch others visit them. The moon, now looking at mars. What great adventures we see before us! And yet, we see so much more out there. More Planets, more moons. And the stars! Not to mention the sun! And the best we can do is to visit.

How glorious God is — to make all those, to place in there, to guide, and sustain them so that we can realize the wonder of the person who made them. O LORD, our Lord, how excellent is your name in all the earth!

But then, comes the real wonder - that God so powerful, with a sense of beauty and control, yet cares about me. Me, powerless, breaker of God's beauty in life, selfish, hurter of others. Me, He cares about. Cares enough to take on my problems, too. He came to us, and lived among us as one of us, subject to our problems - hunger, tired, grief, and loneliness. Somehow, that God so powerful and maker of great beauty, somehow that God subjected Himself to our life. And then, in our place, accepted death. So the maker of all, Lord of Gravity and nuclear burning in the stars, is also the Lord of Life, the giver of life to us who trust Him. How He wants that sky and space to demonstrate His ability to keep His promises. And he promises that the trust in Him He gives us will never fail. Hold on then to Him! You can count on Him.

Prayer - Dear God, build our faith and trust. We know that You will not fail us. Give us strength that we do not fail you. In the name of our Savior, Your Son Jesus Christ, Amen.

Today's Devotion was written by Pastor Art Bolstad

Wednesday August 5, 2020

Read Psalm 9

A Tall Order

We've all had the experience at some point in life of taking on something more than what we could handle. Perhaps you tried to pick up something way too heavy, and you had to just drop it. Maybe you ordered way too much food because it sounded good, and you just could not possibly eat it all. It could be that you started a project that seemed manageable and became an enormous task.

David sets himself up for failure in Psalm 9. He bites off way more than he can possibly chew. Maybe you missed the impossible task that he gives to himself. **“I will give thanks to the Lord with my whole heart; I will recount all of your wonderful deeds.”** Wholehearted thankfulness is a beautiful intention. Recounting all of the wonderful deeds of our God is a blessed impossibility.

This is a tall order: to attempt to catalog all the wonderful deeds of God. This would mean to list off his amazing works of creation – from the grandeur of mountain peaks to the intimate [miracle](#) of how a caterpillar becomes a butterfly. Once you got started listing off the wonderful works of God's creation, you could go for days and days and not nearly exhaust the wonders of God.

Yet the wonderful deeds of God are not limited to creation, but extend to His salvation. David rejoices in Psalm 9 in how God has protected him and rescued him from his enemies. The Lord has rescued *you* from the enemies of sin, death and the devil. When you consider your mountain of sins and the intimacy of God's salvation in the person of Jesus, you will again find endless examples of God's wonderful deeds.

What David has absolutely right is that to give thanks with our whole hearts is directly tied to recounting the wonderful deeds of our God. The great detriment to thankfulness is forgetfulness. But as we recount the innumerable mercies of God in the world around us, in our own lives, for our salvation in Christ, we will constantly speak with David, **“I will be glad and exult in you; I will sing praise to your name, O Most High.”**

Prayer – O Lord, thank you for all of your blessings to me. Help me to recount your wonderful deeds. Amen.

Today's Devotion was written by Pastor Jason

Thursday August 6, 2020

Read Psalm 10

Prayer of Lament, Desire, and the LORD's Strength

Have you ever lamented and sighed at moments of relief? Hmm, perhaps, but not likely. How about afflictions? Frustrations? Or persecution for the sake of Christ!?

In the world, wickedness is present, and the evil foe and his evildoers lurk about seeking to devour and oppress whomever they may, **“he lurks in ambush like a lion in his thicket; he lurks that he may seize the poor.”** Scoffers will scoff at the LORD and His people, mock, persecute, kill the body, and destroy our means and livelihood. Does the LORD allow such mischief? Does not the LORD see all things?

The wicked deny God and blaspheme the Holy Spirit, **“For the wicked boasts of the desires of his soul, and the one greedy for gain curses and renounces the LORD. In the pride of his face the wicked does not seek him; all his thoughts are, “There is no God,”** for they cannot see God and Christ's Kingdom. The Fathers Mercy and Grace are hidden in the Eternal Son of God, in the suffering and glory of Jesus Christ who became poor so that all may become rich in His righteousness for all to believe in His birth, life, sufferings, death, and resurrection for eternal life and redemption.

The LORD's just punishment for sin remains on **“the wicked,”** for the ungodly deny the LORD's Messiah Jesus, cursing His righteous judgment, mercy, and existence. Yet, for those who receive the power and wisdom of the God in Christ Jesus by grace through faith are born anew and He claims and calls us His own, children of God declared righteous on account of Christ.

On the contrary to the thoughts and schemes of **“the evildoer,”** the called and baptized into Christ are granted repentance, faith, and suffering for the sake of Christ, and in and with Christ, pray and lament in psalms in afflictions and persecutions, for the LORD does see all things and mischief on the oppressed, He does strengthen the helpless, **“But You do see, for You note mischief and vexation, that You may take it into Your hands; to You the helpless commits himself; You have been the helper of the fatherless . . . The LORD is King forever and ever; the nations perish from His land.”**

Prayer - “O LORD, You hear the desire of the afflicted; You will strengthen their heart; You will incline your ear to do justice to the fatherless and the oppressed, so that man who is of the earth may strike terror no more.” For the sake of Christ our present Hope, Savior, Lord, and King now and forever, and in the glory of Your new Heavens and earth to come on the Last Day, we thank and praise You for Your strength delivered in our hearts in all things. Amen.

Today's Devotion was written by Pre-Seminary Student Nathan Tritch

Friday August 7, 2020

Read Psalm 11

Confidence

“How can you say to my soul, ‘Flee like a bird to your mountain?’” That’s an easy picture for us to see. At the smallest thing, a bird is scared and flies away at an incredible speed. David has been instructed to do the same thing. Fly away quickly because **“the wicked bend the bow; they have fitted their arrow to the string to shoot in the dark at the upright in heart.”** David has been told to scurry away like a young bird because his enemies have an arrow ready to shoot him down at any moment.

But David is not running. He is asking, “How can you say such a thing?!” David’s refuge is the Lord, and he explains why he doesn’t need to run. **“The Lord is in his holy temple; the Lord’s throne is in heaven; his eyes see...the Lord tests the righteous, but his soul hates the wicked and one who loves violence.”** David knows that the Lord sees all that happens. For David to say **“the Lord’s throne is in heaven,”** doesn’t mean that God is far away or distant from our needs. It means that from His vantage point, the Lord sees everything.

The sees the righteous and wicked. He tests or examines the deeds of all. The wicked are to be met with **“fire and sulfur and a scorching wind.”** The righteous are loved by the Lord and **“the upright shall behold his face.”** So, it is either fire or life in the presence of God.

Why is David confident? He takes refuge in the Lord. His confidence is not in himself. His confidence is in the Lord. David has known wickedness in his own heart, but He trusts in the Lord to forgive. The Lord’s righteousness covers David’s sin. The same is true for you by faith in Jesus. So you, too, can be confident. You can be confident in the righteousness of Christ that belongs to you. You can be confident that the Lord is your refuge. You can be confident that the Lord sees all that you face today, and no matter the outcome of the problems of the day, **“the upright shall behold his face.”** Confidence in our Lord’s everlasting gift of life enables us to be bold living as His people today.

Prayer – Lord, give me confidence to face the day in the certainty of Christ’s righteousness until the day I behold your face by the mercy of Jesus. Amen.

Today’s Devotion was written by Pastor Jason

Saturday August 8, 2020

Read Psalm 12

“Worldly words vs. Godly Words”

I “enjoy” following the news. It makes me feel like I know what’s going on in the world around me. However, in today’s world of 24-hour news, instant connectivity to everything, and the loud voices endlessly shouting everywhere around us, that sometimes gets you down. As the saying goes, “good news doesn’t sell”, and today’s news business is thriving.

In the 12th Psalm, David, like some of the Old Testament prophets, could only see lies and deceitfulness in the people around him. And he knew exactly where this two-facedness came from – they had no faith in God, but rather had total trust in their own words and strength. They proclaimed, **“Our lips are with us; who is master over us?”**

And so, as the lies grow, the **“poor are plundered”**, and **“the needy groan.”** David is led to the conclusion that “the faithful have vanished from among the children of man.” It’s a good thing we don’t have those problems anymore!

But that’s not David’s conclusion. Because of these things, **“I will now arise,” says the Lord**. Remember the Beatitudes? **“Blessed are the poor...”** God came for those who hunger for righteousness. He comes for you. And, in stark contrast to the lies, flattery, and double-speak that come from the faithless, God speaks Truth.

God spoke a perfect creation into existence. God promised a Savior. God told Moses and Abraham, and you and me, **“I will be with you.”** Jesus told Lazarus to come out of the tomb, He rose from the dead on the third day, and you and I will live with Him forever. God promises in His holy Word that he will care for you in every trouble. And His Word is Truth.

Prayer - Lord God, when I read Your Word, help me to remember, “You, O Lord, will keep them; you will guard us from this generation forever.” Amen, and Amen!

Today’s Devotion was written by Pastor Jeff Nelson

Monday August 10, 2020

Read Psalm 13

How Long, O Lord

Today's Psalm is the unofficial Psalm of 2020. It is the questioning of God as pain and suffering lingers, and the hope of its conclusion is low. The presence of Psalm 13 in the Scriptures reminds us that it is okay to ask the Lord, "How long?" We are invited to bring everything before the Lord in prayer, including our frustrations.

Yet it is a fine line between voicing our complaints and blaming God. "**How long, O Lord?**" can be a question of faith that is looking in anticipation to the rescue of God in His time and according to His will. On the hand, "**How long, O Lord?**" can be an accusation against God, when our beef with God consists primarily in Him not acting according to our wishes and our timetables for problems to be solved. In both faith and frustration, I imagine many of us have asked, "**How long, O Lord?**" in both ways through this year.

When our prayers question God and His ways, we do well to remember that Jesus not only commanded us to pray but also graciously promised to hear our prayers and intercede for us before the Father. No matter how weak our prayers or deep our frustration, Jesus' grace makes up for their short comings.

Prayer – Lord Jesus, You conquered death and the grave and, therefore, can handle anything, including our impatient or even disrespectful prayers. Teach us to know that You are greater than all things, so that we pray confidently, Thy will be done. Amen.

Today's Devotion was written by Pastor Jason

The prayer and some thoughts for today's devotion come from [the Lutheran Study Bible](#).

Tuesday August 11, 2020

Read Psalm 14

Them and Us

It is so easy to look at all the others out there! To look around and consider how they fit this Psalm. They show no regard for God; they steal and kill - whether directly or by word. Others think it fine to destroy the world and so deserve God's contempt. But God says, "**They have all gone astray.**" ALL? But surely, He is talking about them...

When God brings His Law on us - we argue, we look away. It is so hard to admit to our faults. And so God puts those words for us to ponder: "**all have gone astray.**" I too need to repent. It might be laziness, it might be anger, it might be pride, and so on. But hard as it is to admit it, I too have gone astray. This Psalm is talking about me too!

Look! The Psalm does not end with "astray". There is mention made of "**the Salvation of Israel**". We know that God came to the earth: Jesus, God Himself, has come as a man and paid the price of our wrongdoing. He conquered death, dying on the cross, rising on Easter morning. Here is the answer to our (and their) being "astray". Trusting in Him, abandoning our dreams of being righteous, letting His salvation bring us to rightness with God - means, "Yes, we were astray; But He has made it right, brought us back to God. We are saved."

Prayer - Dear God, thank you for reminding me of the fact of my need for your salvation. Thank you also for giving me that salvation, rich and free. Guide me now, Lord, as I live in You and the life you give me. Amen.

Today's Devotion was written by Pastor Art Bolstad

Wednesday August 12, 2020

Read Psalm 15

Walk Blamelessly

Sometimes God's law sounds like something we can handle: don't murder, don't steal, no problem. Then we run into words like those in Psalm 15. Think of these are entry requirements of worship, thus David's question, "O Lord, who shall sojourn in your tent?" Here are the requirements:

- Walks blamelessly and does what is right
- Speaks truth in his heart (truth = God's truth)
- Doesn't slander
- Does no evil to his neighbor
- A vile person is despised
- Honors those who fear the Lord
- Keeps his word even when it may harm him
- Refuses to charge others interest
- Won't take a bribe to convict someone innocent
- He always does all of these things

No one can get past the first two words, "walk blamelessly," and our record only gets worse as we read through the list. The point is that a wise person would recognize the impossibility of this list. That doesn't mean we shouldn't aim to fulfill God's law. Of course, we desire and strive to live as holy people, but we are called holy only by Christ who walked blamelessly and always did what was right. And he did so on our behalf.

Out of love for Christ, we strive to live to this standard while humbly knowing that only Christ "always does all of these things."

Prayer – (For today's prayer, ask the Lord to forgive you and help you with one of the items above that particularly struck you as a sin with which you struggle.)

Today's Devotion was written by Pastor Jason

Thursday August 13, 2020

Read Psalm 16

Refuge and JOY Forevermore

We have all likely been delighted and joyful in many worldly temporal ways; in childhood, marriage, parenthood, grandparenthood, birthdays, holidays, reunions, gatherings, concerts, trips/vacations, and accomplishments of many sorts. Although having JOY in the LORD is not a worldly temporal experience or feeling, rather **“fullness of JOY”** is the presence of the LORD, given and fulfilled for all in Christ through faith alone. This JOY is a heavenly spiritual and eternal promise of **“pleasures forevermore”** in God dwelling among His people for the sake of Christ Jesus crucified, risen, ascended and exalted at the right hand of God with power. True JOY is more than human emotion and experience, JOY is God’s eternal action preserved and fully secured for you forevermore in Christ Jesus.

As we meditate on God’s Word in this psalm, David prophesied the Messiah, pointing all people and all Christians to Jesus. Saint Peter proclaims this fulfillment in Psalm 16:

this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men. God raised him up, loosing the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it. For David says concerning him, ‘I saw the Lord always before me, for he is at my right hand that I may not be shaken; therefore my heart was glad, and my tongue rejoiced; my flesh also will dwell in hope. For you will not abandon my soul to Hades, or let your Holy One see corruption You have made known to me the paths of life; you will make me full of gladness with your presence’” (Acts 2:23-28; see Acts 2:29-31; 13:35).

Till the Last Day Resurrection, we Christians are now and forevermore in Christ, **“looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the JOY that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.”** (Hebrews 12:2)

Prayer - LORD God, **“I have no good apart from You.”** We thank You that You go before us and preserve us in Your eternal refuge in Christ Jesus crucified and risen for our Hope and salvation through faith. Your presence delights, instructs, and burns in our hearts to love and serve You above all things, and to love our neighbors as we rejoice in Your **“fullness of JOY”** forevermore in Jesus Christ. Amen.

Today’s Devotion was written by Pre-Seminary Student Nathan Tritch

Friday August 14, 2020

Read Psalm 17

The Apple of Your Eye

It's a funny phrase – “the apple of your eye.” The phrase originally came from the belief that your pupil looked somewhat like an apple. So it literally referred to the center of your eye, but you can see where the meaning came from. Whoever or whatever is at the center of your vision is the apple of your eye. This person or this thing captivates your attention like no one else.

The phrase shows up a few times in Scripture, but two times it is worth special notice. Here in Psalm 17, David is once more running for his life, perhaps from King Saul. Enemies are after him, but David is well aware of how the Lord has cared for him again and again. So he prays, “**keep me as the apple of your eye.**” David isn't necessarily saying that he personally is more important than every other person in the eyes of God, but to know the mercy and love of God is to be the apple of his eye. This means that in a very real way, you are the apple of God's eye. You and your salvation have captivated the Lord's attention like nothing else as the Son of David, Jesus Christ, gave all because you are so precious to Him.

The reality of God's captivating mercy for us leads us to the second mention of this phrase that I want to mention. As you are the apple of God's eye, He has in mind what He wants to captivate your attention. Proverbs 7:2 says, “**keep my commandments and live; keep my teaching as the apple of your eye.**” The Lord who loves us and treasures us as the center of His vision wants us to focus our attention on His Word. After all, if we have His Word, we will know Him.

Prayer – Lord, make Your Word the apple of my eye. Amen.

Today's Devotion was written by Pastor Jason

Saturday August 15

Read [Psalm 18:1-24](#)

“The Lord Is My Rock and My Fortress”

Have you ever felt like you were the “little kid on the block”? You know, the one the bullies just love to pick on? On the other hand, do you think of yourself as a mighty warrior, generally able to safely navigate through the most challenging battle? Either way, there are always those really tough times when you wish you could turn on a “Bat-Signal” to call a superhero to save you.

Our Psalm today is another from David’s pen, in which he shows both these sides. He had been anointed by God to be King of Israel and had already proven to be a mighty general that led God’s People to victory in battle over all their enemies. So you wouldn’t think he’d be afraid of much. At this point, though, he was being pursued by Saul and his armies and David was outnumbered and surrounded. He felt the “cords and snares of death” staring him in the face. Destruction was like a flood pouring over him and hell itself was pulling him down.

So, “**In my distress I called upon the Lord,**” and David was lifted from his despair. In the most vivid language possible, David describes how it’s good to have a “jealous” God.

**“Then the earth reeled and rocked;
the foundations also of the mountains trembled
and quaked, because he (God) was angry.
Smoke went up from his nostrils,
and devouring fire from his mouth;
glowing coals flamed forth from him.”**

This imagery (and that which follows) brings to mind earlier times of God’s deliverance – from the Egyptian armies as the Israelites fled through the Red Sea, for Noah and his family, as they were delivered from the floodwaters of the deep, and as God delivered the 10 Commandments to His People from the clouds over Mt. Sinai.

You see, that jealous, fire-breathing, earth-shaking God is the same God you and I are invited to bring our troubles to. He’s jealous for you and me and all those who call on the Name of His Son, Jesus. And, like the Shepherd of Israel He is, he holds you in His arms and comforts you.

Prayer: I love you, O Lord, my strength. You are my rock and my fortress and my deliverer; my God - my rock, in whom I take refuge, Amen.

Today’s Devotion was written by Pastor Jeff Nelson

Tuesday August 18, 2020

Read Psalm 19

God's Reminders

Who has not looked at the world, and marveled at the beauty in what they saw? Even bears have been seen watching a sunset in awe! The world does not need words of human languages to express the reality of what God has done. But with all the evidence before them, with the opportunity to see and experience what God has done, people still refuse to admit that He knows what He is doing!

He showed His power in the sun - blazing across the sky. He shows His concern and love for people when He gave them direct information on His Will and ways in the Bible - His law, His testimonies, His statutes, His commandments! They too reflect God's purity and beauty. And then they show His power when they change our lives, bringing trust and confidence, bringing what is good in our lives, living in Him in His ways.

How else would we know how to live? How else would we be able to enjoy the world He has given us? Without His intervention we would be so focused on ourselves we would miss out on life! So, God gives us a reminder that He is in control with the wonder of days and nights and the sun storming across the sky. So, God directs us to His ways and His Word to see, believe, and understand His ways. Praise the Lord!

Prayer: Father in Heaven! Thank you for your attention to my needs for reminders. Thank you for the Bible where You do give me Words that change my life. Thank you for it all! Amen.

Today's Devotion was written by Pastor Art Bolstad

Wednesday August 19, 2020

Read Psalm 20

What Do You Trust In?

“Some trust in chariots, some trust in horses...” David’s statement here is striking. He is a king. He is a military leader. Chariots and horses would have been essential tools. Often times, the best tools, the best technology, lead to victory over a foe. It makes me think about the current commercial from pharmaceutical companies that concludes with a series of doctors (or actors in lab coats) saying, “Science...science...science is what will get life back to normal.”

Some trust in chariots, some trust in science, some trust in horses, some trust in _____ (fill in the blank). No matter the enemy, we have a tendency to trust in tools, instead of the Giver of all Good Gifts. You see, used properly, chariots and science and horses are all good tools that can be incredibly helpful. When we trust in them as THE great answer, they become idols. They become dangerous.

So, King David who would have used chariots and horses in battle, still didn’t trust in them. **“Some trust in chariots, some trust in horses, but we trust in the name of the LORD our God.”** The name Yahweh (translated as LORD in all caps) means “I am.” He is present everywhere. He knows all. He is able to do all. He is the Creator. He is the Savior. He is above all. He is THE great answer to our needs. He provides for our needs in many ways – through chariots, through scientists (who simply discover what He already knows), and most importantly through His own self-giving love in Christ that rescues us from sin, death and the devil. We trust in Him.

Prayer – Lord, help me to use properly Your gifts, but help me to trust in You alone. Amen.

Today’s Devotion was written by Pastor Jason

Thursday August 20, 2020

Read Psalm 21

“We will Sing and Praise Your Power”

Singing, social closeness, congregational singing with dear brothers and sisters in Christ have been varyingly restricted in many places. While necessary for a time, congregational singing is an everlasting blessing prohibited in many places in Christ’s Kingdom in the “now and not yet.” Yet, now, the LORD’s love and JOY is with us, present and eternal, unfailing and immovable for us in the Anointed Jesus, in His victory over the power of sin, death, and the enemy Satan and forces of evil, putting “**them to flight,**” the Power of God for salvation!

This musical Psalm of David eternally relates to and prophesies Christ and shows thanksgiving to Yahweh, likely from a recent victorious battle won for Israel. This is the LORD’s victory and presence with His people, the same everlasting JOY we see throughout the psalms, “**For You make him most blessed forever; You make him glad with the JOY of Your presence.**” The favor of the LORD is Yahweh’s presence (as we learned the Name of the LORD “Yahweh” in yesterday’s psalm meditation, “I AM”) in the flesh, Jesus the Messiah crucified and risen given to us through faith!

Praise and thanksgiving are due to the “**Most High**” during good and bad times; celebrations, plagues, famines, spiritual dryness, and spiritual growth; for our Lord Jesus Christ, “**the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end**” (Revelation 1:8; 21:6; 22:13), will come quickly with reward, recompense, and final deliverance (see Rev. 22:7, 12, 20) from this present sinful and redeemed world.

In the New Heaven and New Earth, the fullness of all things and the LORD’s presence will be consummated on the Last Day Resurrection when Jesus comes “**with the clouds of heaven**” (Rev. 1:7; see Dan 7:10). Today, we share in Christ’s death and resurrection through faith receiving the LORD’s JOY delivered in Word and Sacraments. During pestilences and victories, and yes even COVID-19, The LORD is “**Most High,**” as there is nothing and no one higher bestowing “**unending blessings**” and immovable unfailing “**steadfast love**” in Christ our King!

Prayer - LORD “**Most High,**” “**we will sing and praise Your power**” and give thanks in Your victory over the power of sin and death, delivering us from all evil and granting us grace and strength to trust in You now and forever on account of Christ Jesus and His righteousness freely given to us by grace through faith. Amen.

Today’s Devotion was written by Pre-seminary student Nathan Tritch

Friday August 21, 2020

Read Psalm 22

Writing Someone Else's Story...that is Still Yours

Many of the Psalms offer an incredibly intimate look inside of David as he expresses faith through celebration and suffering. Sometimes we see how David's words reflect our experience. Sometimes we see how David's words prepare us for the Son of David, Jesus Christ, who is King of Israel and King of all. Then, in today's Psalm, we recognize that what David describes poetically in himself is a prophecy of what Christ will experience.

Jesus quoted the opening words of the Psalm as He hung on the cross: **"My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?"** In the mouth of Jesus, the point is not so much that Jesus is unsure. He is living Psalm 22. David knew abandonment and suffering, but some of this Psalm clearly points to only one person in David's family tree. Consider, "For dogs encompass me; a company of evildoers encircles me; they have pierced my hands and feet—I can count all my bones—they stare and gloat over me; they divide my garments among them, and for my clothing they cast lots." Jesus is clearly the fulfillment of these words.

Yet in a mysterious way, David can write these of Himself. We can consider these as our words as well. Why? Because Christ endured this suffering for us. Not only that, Paul tells us, "For as we share abundantly in Christ's sufferings, so through Christ we share abundantly in comfort too." (2 Cor. 1:5) As we hear the horrible description of Christ's suffering, we rejoice in the beautiful mystery that these words declare the unlimited bound of Christ's love for David, for you, and for all.

Prayer – Comfort my heart in all trials, as I stand in awe at your boundless love for me and all. Amen.

Today's Devotion was written by Pastor Jason

Saturday August 22

Read [Psalm 23](#)

“The LORD is my shepherd”

While in the Air Force, I had an instructor who had proudly piloted F-4 fighter jets while in the service. Over his desk hung a plaque that read, “Yea, though I fly through the valley of the shadow of death, I shall fear no evil, for the F-4 is one fast son of a gun.” That stuck with me over the years. It turns out, if you search the internet for “Psalm 23 parodies”, a lot of people have tried to improve on David’s words. Some are funny; most just substitute things to intentionally show the futility of looking for comfort and hope anywhere other than God (for example, “The TV is my shepherd, I shall not want. It makes me to lie down on the sofa”).

Every image created by David’s words evokes calm, peace, and a soothing sense of being perfectly and completely loved and cared for. For me, verse five makes a peculiar connection. As I grew up during the 70s, I enjoyed the odd humor of Monty Python. So, whenever I hear the words, “**You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies**”, I picture the Python troupe sitting at a table outdoors, quietly enjoying lunch, as thousands of barbarians armed with swords, battle axes, and spears rush towards them, yelling war cries at the tops of their lungs. But they continue making small talk and eating, completely oblivious to the chaos around them, for the LORD is serving them.

Sound crazy? Yes, it does. The world would say our “imaginary man in the sky” is nutty. They’d say it’s ludicrous to look for comfort in someone you can’t see or touch. But, just as surely as Jesus calmed the stormy seas, the Father provided manna and quail in the desert, and the Holy Spirit washed you with water and the Word, we understand David’s words. “**The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.**”

Prayer - **Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever, Amen.**

Today’s Devotion was written by Pastor Jeff Nelson

Monday August 24, 2020

Read Psalm 24

A Pure Heart before THE King

Today's Psalm is bookended with a glorious description of God. He is the One to whom all things belong, for he made all things. **"The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein, for He has founded upon the seas and established it upon the rivers."** But that's not all. At the end of the Psalm, He is described as THE King – **"strong and mighty."** He is the One who fights for His people and has power over **"the hosts,"** that is the angel armies. He is over all.

Stuck in the middle is a fair question: **"Who shall ascend the hill of the Lord?"** Who has any business being in the presence of One who has such power and glory belonging to Him? Really, the answer is no one. No one is worthy to stand before such a holy, powerful king. David describes who may climb the hill. **"He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not lift up his soul to what is false and does not swear deceitfully."** Clean hands and a pure heart. This is someone righteous inside and out. Thoughts, words, and deeds. For sinful people, even forgiven ones, how is this possible?

Martin Luther described it this way: "What is meant by a pure heart is this: one that is watching and pondering what God says and replacing his own ideas with the Word of God. This alone is pure before God. ... Therefore, though a common laborer, a shoemaker or a blacksmith may be dirty or may smell because he is covered with dirt and pitch, still he may sit at home and think, 'My God has made me a man. He has given me my house, wife and child and has commanded me to love them and to support them with my work.' Note that he is pondering the Word of God in his heart, and though he stinks outwardly, inwardly he is pure incense before God, but if he attains the highest purity, so that he also takes hold of the Gospel and believes in Christ, then he is pure completely. Inwardly, in his heart toward God and outwardly toward everything under him on earth."

Prayer – Lord, make me completely pure through Christ and Your Word. Amen.

Today's Devotion was written by Pastor Jason

Tuesday August 18, 2020

Read Psalm 25

Our God – Immense and Yet Personal

When one considers the universe, the size the complexity of all that is; when one matches that to oneself, there comes a temptation to put it all aside, to figure that God can't be bothered with me - or what I do or think! But ... God is more than the architect of it all, He is a personal relationship person. God knows all about me - and cares. He cares about rightness and wrongness. Relationships need rightness, and He wants His relationship with me!

But I know myself - too well. I don't do rightness, there are my transgressions - selfishness, greediness, a mocking of God's right ways... I know that and it scares me! How can God continue to want a relationship with someone so opposed to His ways? And so **"The troubles of my heart are enlarged."** I want to be like God but keep failing.

I thank you God, that You have come to me rather than waiting for me to come to You. You came to me, Jesus, carried my penalties and restored me to rightness. Now I am God's friend. Keep helping me! As you direct, guide, and support me, I find your ways are best. Keep teaching me, O God, keep me learning your ways. Let your Words, your teachings grow in my mind, my heart, and my actions. Thank you again.

Prayer: O Lord, when I look at myself, I get worried and sad; I see my failures; but when I look to You I see your successes. O Lord, let my eyes and mind focus on You alone. In Jesus', name, Amen.

Today's Devotion was written by Pastor Art Bolstad

Wednesday August 26, 2020

Read Psalm 26

Quite a Test

What is the hardest test that you've ever taken? You may remember an extremely stressful exam from high school or college. You may think of an especially challenging time in your life that tested you physically, mentally or spiritually. But did you ask for it? Did you request the test?

David does. **"Prove me, O Lord and try me; test my heart and my mind."** Imagine asking God for a test to see how your faith is doing right now. How would you be doing? Do you find yourself drowning under a lot of worry and anxiety or do you trust in him? Or a mixture of both?

Either way, it seems remarkable for David to stand before God and ask to be tested. We know enough about David to know he was an adulterer and a murderer, yet also called by Scripture a man **"after God's own heart."** David wants to be a godly man of high integrity and love, though he fell woefully short. Still, he asks to be tested on this basis: **"For your steadfast love is before my eyes, and I walk in your faithfulness."** Where is David's trust? In the steadfast love of God. In HIS faithfulness.

We may not request for our faith to be tested, but it is regularly through this life. For many this has been a year of great testing, and more than anything tests lead us to reveal where our trust is. At times, we trust too much in our ability to handle every problem, and this tends to lead us either to arrogance or anxiety. In the time of testing, Christ calls us to trust in His steadfast love and faithfulness. He invites us to look to Him, the One who passed every test for us and our salvation. Since Christ's love dwells in us, we say, "I trust in Him, because I know He is for me, He died and rose again for me, and in His strength He will see me through every test."

Prayer – Lord, in my time of testing, help me to trust in You. Amen.

Today's Devotion was written by Pastor Jason

Thursday August, 27, 2020

Read Psalm 27

The LORD is My Light and Salvation

We all have many fears coming at us in this world. Some fears are kind of silly, and some produce anxiety and panic. As a child, I was terrified of forklifts and their “beep! beep!” noises coming to get me. In my fear, I remember crying and hugging my parents, hiding in their presence, and trusting in them for safety and shelter from the horrific metal “beeping” dinosaurs.

What fears did David face? A host of evildoers encamping against him, coming to devour his flesh. Yet, in the midst of darkness, David is confident and trusts in the LORD and His Light and Salvation:

“My heart shall not fear; though war arise against me, yet I will be confident. One thing have I asked of the LORD, that will I seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the LORD and to inquire in His temple. For He will hide me in His shelter in the day of trouble, He will conceal me under the cover of His tent [tabernacle].”

Luther makes an appropriate observation:

“Tabernacle is the Church or the Body of Christ . . . And in it is hidden every believer. This hiding must not be understood in a physical sense, because the saints are certainly placed on the candlestick (cf. Mark 4:21) . . . Therefore *to be hidden* is nothing else than not running with those who live carnally, something the carnal people see plainly. . . . *The cover* therefore is the Church’s faith, or spirit, which is the same. For they live by faith and in spirit . . . But the Church is defended in spiritual things, so that they cannot be taken away from her or she be harmed in them, for they are invincible and eternal spiritual benefits of faith.” (LW 10:125).

Yahweh is our Light and salvation in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. What courage, what comfort, and what JOY! **“I will offer in His tent sacrifices with shouts of JOY; I will sing and make melody to the LORD . . . [for] I believe that I shall look upon the LORD in the land of the living!”**

Prayer - O LORD, You are my light and my salvation, thank You for protecting me in Your Beauty, Goodness, and Mercy for the sake of Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.

Optional: If you have your Lutheran Service Book at home, turn to “The Lord is My Light” (LSB: 723), and follow this link, <https://youtu.be/2aXy20wc-a4> for classic piano “stringed instrument,” and sing with JOY to the LORD in Christ Jesus!

Today’s Devotion was written by Pre-seminary Student Nathan Tritch

Friday August 28, 2020

Read Psalm 28

When God is Silent

Psalm 28:1 **"Do not turn a deaf ear to me. For if You remain silent, I will be like those who have gone down to the pit."**

David's request is one that we can appreciate. It bothers us when God seems to be silent. When we look at our lives and the world around us, we think there is plenty for Him to talk about right now. If only He'd come out and prove by some word that He is there. Not just that, with only a word, He could resolve the things that are so wrong about this world. But many days, it feels like God says nothing.

But perhaps, the problem is not with God, but with us. As the book of Hebrews puts it, **"In many and various ways, God spoke to His people of old by the prophets, but now, in these last days, He has spoken to us by His Son."** Many times, God seems silent. Many times, we are tempted to think that He doesn't care. But this is usually because we only listen for Him to tell us what we want to hear in the moment.

Remember He is the One who left His throne in heaven and exchanged it for a bed of straw at Christmas time because He cares; He is the One who let the soldiers mock and beat and crucify him because He cares; He is the One who bore our grief and carried our sorrows because He cares. And as we hear the words of the Psalms, we are reminded of His care at all times. After all, **"The Lord is the strength of his people; he is the saving refuge of his anointed."** (Ps 28:8)

Prayer – **"Oh save your people and bless your heritage! Be their shepherd and carry them forever."** Amen. (Ps 28:9)

Today's Devotion was written by Pastor Jason

Saturday August 29

Read [Psalm 29](#)

“A Vision of God”

Throughout its many words, the Bible records visions and dreams experienced by the faithful in order to reveal something about God in amazing ways. This Psalm may be the closest thing to such an account by David. His words absolutely gush out of his pen, racing to describe this awesome image of God.

“The voice of the LORD...breaks the cedars of Lebanon” (imagine the redwoods of California, crushed with a word). **“The voice of the LORD flashes forth flames of fire...(and) shakes the wilderness”**. Lebanon and Sirion (tall mountains where pagan gods would reside) are made by the LORD to skip and dance. The LORD’s voice **“makes the deer give birth and strips the forests bare”**.

I don’t believe this is a vision, though. I think David is gathering into one Psalm many of the encounters he’s witnessed of God’s actions in the world around him. David has fought lions trying to steal his sheep, led armies in battle, he’s ruled as king over Israel; in other words, he’s seen God at work. He’s seen God paint beautiful sunrises, provide for the animals in the wild, and give David victories he did nothing to earn.

But what makes this Psalm even more mind blowing is that it is traditionally read at baptisms. Next time you see a little baby, being held by an adult because he or she can’t even sit up, having water poured over him while the Name of the Triune God is spoken into him – remember these words. **“The voice of the Lord is over the waters; the God of glory thunders”** as He washes the sins from the child.

What a perfect description of baptism:

**“The Lord sits enthroned over the flood;
the Lord sits enthroned as king forever.
May the Lord give strength to his people!
May the Lord bless his people with peace!”**

Prayer - Lord God, make me remember how Your mighty hand washed me in the waters of baptism. Continue to dwell within me, strengthening me and blessing me with Your peace. Amen.

Today’s Devotion was written by Pastor Jeff Nelson

Monday August 31, 2020

Read Psalm 30

Joy Comes with the Morning

Yesterday, I was finally able to come out of quarantine. I spent two weeks in the basement. Resting, recovering, praying. I was still pretty spent when it was time for me to come upstairs, but I was greeted by something wonderful – not just the smiling faces of my family members, but also the sun. It was as though dawn had broken after a two-week night.

It might not be illness. Perhaps your darkness has been grief, or it could be guilt. In this life, a myriad of problems plunges us into darkness for a time, and the night of our pain, illness, grief or guilt can seem to last forever. In the darkness, we can be consumed with tears whether the darkness has been caused by our own doing or just by our presence in this sin-filled world.

David wrote Psalm 30 as **“a song at the dedication of the temple.”** You may know that David didn’t build the temple, but he did purchase the land. He had taken a census of all fighting age men, which was really a sign that David trusted in his fighting force more than in the Lord. A plague came on the land. The darkness led to the death of 70,000. In sorrow for his sin, David bought land and offered a sacrifice there. (This later was the place of the temple.) In a darkness of illness, grief and guilt, David, **“cried to (the Lord) for help, and (He) healed me.”** The forgiveness of God meant physical and spiritual healing – an end to the plague and peace with God.

So David proclaimed, **“Sing praises to the Lord, o you, his saints, and give thanks to his holy name. For his anger is but for a moment, and his favor is for a lifetime. Weeping may tarry for the night, but joy comes in the morning.”** Such healing to bring you through your time of darkness is assured in Your Savior, the Son of David, who has **“turned for me (and you!) my mourning into dancing,”** by defeating pain and illness and sin and death by His death and resurrection. Rejoice today in the light and mercy of Christ!

Prayer – Dear Jesus, in my time in darkness, grant me healing in body and soul according to Your mercy. Amen.

Today’s Devotion was written by Pastor Jason

Tuesday September 1, 2020

Read Psalm 31

Still I Rejoice

There are times when troubles overwhelm me. Everyone around me seems to delight in my vulnerability, and I know how weak I am. But I have one comfort in such troubled times - I have a refuge! God who knows my failures; God who knows my heart; God who knows - yet loves me! God who is above all, unlike me, a success. He took on the whole world, gave His life for me, and yet conquered all.

So in the midst of trouble, in the midst of aching loneliness, still I rejoice. When I look at myself, when I try to control my life, despair rides high; but when I look at my refuge, my fortress, that is, God my Savior, then despair crumbles, sinks away in small pieces. My Savior knows me and loves me. He stands in the way of those perils, making me successful and strong.

But what about how weak I am? What about my vulnerabilities? They still exist, but now they direct me to Jesus. The weaker I am, the stronger I realize that He is. Now instead of fearing my troubles, I can rejoice because they direct to Jesus and to depending on Him.

How God turns life upside down? What life wants to make my worst day; God turns into my best. The less I depend on what I can do, the less I try to handle things alone, the better it all turns out. Thank you God! Thank you for being here for me!

Prayer: Many, O Lord, are my troubles. Please save me - save from letting them dominate me. Bring me out of myself, to see You - trust You - and rejoice with You. Thank you for turning my life upside down. Amen.

Today's Devotion was written by Pastor Art Bolstad

Wednesday September 2, 2020

Read Psalm 32

With Guilt or Guile

Today's reading brought to mind a question that I once heard: how do you deal with sin in your life, with guile or with guilt? Our inclination is often towards guile. If at all possible, we want to explain our sin away. We become exceptionally adept at guile in our relationships with others. We flatter others in order to try and get what we want. We backbite against our employers and fellow workers, slow down deliberately in our work, and take company materials home with us for our own use. Guile. Children sneak a cookie when no one is looking, take something belonging to a brother or sister, and lie to Mom or Dad. Guile. In church we sometimes pretend piety toward God while blaming others for our wrong attitudes and bad example. Guile.

David was well accustomed to the same tactics. He tried to deal with his sin by using guile – with extremely poor results. **“when I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long. For day and night your hand was heavy upon me; my strength was dried up as by the heat of summer.”** Imagine trying to hide your sin from God! What foolishness, and yet it is a foolish attempt at guile that we all know too well.

Yet when he honestly admitted guilt, David experienced the beautiful forgiveness of God. **“I acknowledged my sin to You and did not cover up my iniquity. I said, ‘I will confess my transgressions to the LORD’ – and You forgave the iniquity (the guilt) of my sin.”**

Consider the freedom to be found in laying guile aside and confessing our guilt. We are promised that as we confess our guilt to God and to one another, **“the blood of Jesus, His Son, purifies us from all sin”** (1 John 1:7). Jesus, who lived a sinless life, dealt with our guilt on the cross as He fully paid for the sins of the world. Children of God in Baptism, we regularly receive forgiveness in the Word and at the altar, where His body and blood await us. In the end, neither guile nor guilt avail, but grace and the good news of Jesus.

PRAYER: Lord God, I confess my sins to You and thank You for sending Your Son to die for me so that my sins are now forgiven. Amen.

Today's Devotion was written by Pastor Jason

Thursday September 3, 2020

Read Psalm 33

The Word of the LORD

So we say, “you have my word,” and “I promise!” How good are these statements when we hear or speak them? Sometimes? Always? Never? Hmm . . . I like to think my words are trustworthy all the time, yet, I have not kept my words pure, righteous, upright, and faithful. Although I cannot, the LORD keeps His Word and promises steadfast all the time, for His steadfast love, mercy, and Word endures forever!

We know and believe by God’s grace alone through faith alone, the Joy and Hope of the LORD our GOD because of the Gospel of Christ alone revealed to us in Scripture alone; the Word of God come down from Heaven to save us, **“in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. . . For by Him all things were created”** (Col. 1:14, 16; see Gen. 1:1-4; John 1:1-5).

Today, we see the psalmist rejoicing, **“By the word of the LORD the heavens were made, and by the breath of His mouth all their host . . . Let all the earth fear the LORD; let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him! For He spoke, and it came to be; He commanded, and it stood firm”** (33:6, 8-9).

Luther’s *What does this mean?* on the first commandment rings loudly here, “We should fear, love, and trust in God above all things” (Luther’s Small Catechism), and yet, we do not. Again, we cannot do good works or believe in God apart from Christ, but God in Christ alone has done all good works for and through us by faith in His birth, life, death, resurrection, and ascension, for He is **“upright, and all His work is done in faithfulness”** (33:4).

JESUS, **“the Christ, the Son of the living God”** (Matt. 16:16), foretold and fulfilled God’s Word that He would die and rise again on the third day, and through faith in Him, we sing **“a new song”** (33:3; Isa. 42:10; Rev. 5:9; 14:3) because of redemption and forgiveness of sin in Him, and His eternal life and righteousness given for us.

Prayer - O LORD, we hope in Your steadfast love and deliverance of our souls from eternal death through Jesus Christ for our redemption and the forgiveness of sins, **“For our heart is glad in Him, because we trust His holy name. Let Your steadfast love, O LORD, be upon us, even as we hope in You** (33:22),” in JESUS Name. Amen.

Today’s Devotion was written by Pre-seminary Student Nathan Tritch

Friday September 4, 2020

Read Psalm 34

At All Times?

David's beginning to Psalm 34 seems...unrealistic. **"I will bless the Lord at all times; his praise shall continually be in my mouth."** Now you can probably think of plenty of times when praise would be on your lips: at the sight of a beautiful sunset or the first glimpse of your child, when serious harm was narrowly avoided or when a painful conflict was finally ended, perhaps when you were able to be in worship after a long absence (or perhaps you are looking toward that day). There are SOOO many times when praise is on our lips.

But continually? At all times? How can David say such a thing? How can he invite us to say the same? As the heading to the Psalm points out this Psalm was written, **"when he changed his behavior before Abimelech."** David was on the run from King Saul, but his only option was to hide out in enemy territory ruled by Abimelech. The only way he was safe was to act insane, but even then David was endanger until he was **"driven out...and went away."** David's song of praise at all times comes while he is under attack on every side. This does not seem like the occasion when praise would be on his lips. Nevertheless, he wrote this Psalm. It is an acrostic poem in Hebrew (each line begins with a letter of the alphabet).

Taken together the point is even more remarkable. For every letter, there is a word of praise. In every occasion, David has been **"delivered from all his fears,"** had **"the angel of the encamped around him,"** and **"tasted and seen that the Lord is good."** In difficult times, we may not feel like this, but the truth is that we have been delivered from our greatest fears of sin, death and the devil. The Lord has protected us through untold dangers physical and spiritual, and in Christ, we have tasted and seen the goodness of the Lord in forgiving us, strengthening us, providing for us, and promising us eternal life and hope. No matter the challenge of the moment, we could list from A-Z (and more!) why in Christ the praise of the Lord shall continually be in our mouths.

PRAYER: Oh Lord, I praise and thank you for your great goodness to me in every time through Christ, my Savior. Amen.

Today's Devotion was written by Pastor Jason

Saturday September 5

Read [Psalm 35](#)

“Bearing Your Cross”

At face value, today’s Psalm relates King David’s lamentation to the LORD regarding the deceitfulness of some of his former “friends” and supporters. These weren’t simply royal officials who no longer liked the king – they were actively seeking his failure and overthrow. They wanted him dead. David prays that the traps they set for him would instead ensnare *them*, that the figurative pit they dug to swallow up his life would become *their* place of destruction. He had worn sackcloth and fasted over their travails “**as one who laments his mother**”. He mourns the fact that these were the same ones that he had prayed for when they were sick.

At an entirely different level, reading this Psalm – all the way through – as if spoken by Jesus Himself – will reveal the intensely personal experience Christ endured on Good Friday. The lies, the false accusations, the hate that David writes about is just a shadow of the spite that Jesus received at His trial, His march to Golgotha, His crucifixion.

This is a psalm about bearing your cross. Unlike David, you and I probably don’t feel like people around us want us dead. Most of the time, we don’t experience the “king” sized problems that David did. We don’t have all humanity and God Himself turn their backs on us, as Jesus did. We have “normal” sized crosses to bear. If you’re like me, you might have a physical/health issue that you bear every day. It’s a matter-of-fact kind of thing – it will never go away and will worsen as you age, but it constantly reminds you of where your hope must lie.

David tells us about his cross. It got him down and tore at his very soul, every day. It hurt him to his bones. But, like the amazed discovery by Jesus’ followers on Easter morning that “**He is alive!**”, David is delivered from his tormentors. And David rejoices in the congregation of believers who join him in praising God, “**who delights in the welfare of His servant!**”

Heavenly Father, strengthen me to bear the crosses that come my way in life. Like David, make them turn me to You for my sure Hope. In Jesus’ Name, Amen.

Today’s Devotion was written by Pastor Jeff Nelson

Monday September 7, 2020

Read Psalm 36

Two Consuming Words

Psalm 36 presents an astounding difference. The opening words speak of the incredible power of delusion that sin possesses. **“Transgression speaks to the wicked deep in his heart...he flatters himself in his own eyes that his iniquity cannot be found out and hated...He plots trouble while on his bed; he sets himself in a way that is not good; he does not reject evil.”** It is hard to hear these words and not imagine an almost comic book master villain cackling at his own evil plot. The scary thing is that such delusion is directly tied to sin. Consider this power: **“transgression speaks to the wicked deep in his heart.”** It brings to mind the words of Jesus that tells us that **“evil comes from the heart.”** At the very least, this tells us that sinful people should be very wary of the common advice to “follow our hearts.” According to Scripture, the sinful heart makes for a lousy compass.

Yet after describing the sinister nature of the heart that follows only its own guidance, David presents a picture of a wholly (Holy) different word. **“Your steadfast love, O LORD, extends to the heavens, your faithfulness to the clouds...your judgments are like the great deep; man and beast you save, O LORD...For with you is the fountain of life; in your light do we see light. Oh, continue your steadfast love to those who know you, and your righteousness to the upright of heart!”** In your light do we see light. With the Word of the Lord that proclaims His steadfast love, we are freed from delusion to see what is good and right. We have life and forgiveness in Christ. We have direction and guidance toward what our hearts should desire. In faith, we are guided by His light, and only then are we “upright of heart.”

PRAYER: “Let not the foot of arrogance come upon me, nor the hand of the wicked drive me away.” Lead me to trust in the all-consuming good of Your Word. Amen.

Today’s Devotion was written by Pastor Jason

Tuesday September 8, 2020

Read Psalm 37:1-17

Fret Not

So often the song of our lives is measured by “control”. I want to ensure that my life goes correctly - as I plan it. So, I take steps to make my actions and those of others correspond to those plans. But the wicked, how they disrupt my plans; how they fail to act rightly. I call on our God to act, to take care of them, to eradicate their false actions! I am right, those are false actions; so why doesn't God punish them?

My desire for “control” is itself wrong. Why do “I” think I can tell God what and when to do anything? “**Fret not yourself,**” the psalmist tells us. A “fret” is a raised bar on a guitar - you can run your fingers over it and hear a repeated thudding sound - like making a motor on you bicycle wheel. Fretting worries repeatedly about something, usually something we have no control over! Our desire for control is the problem.

God will take care of the wicked. He never fails, but He does things in His good time, not ours. So “fret not yourself” but rather rest in knowing that God will indeed do what is needed.

Instead of paying attention to those bad people, look at God and His ways. Focus your thoughts on how you yourself live with God. There is more than enough in His Word to keep you living in wonder and grace all your life. And there you will find that God pulls your thoughts and ideas into His ways, making that fretting we did seem totally inconsequential.

Prayer: O Lord, how my affairs in this world grab my attention and bring it away from You. Help me to drop the “fretting” and in attending to Your Word, to live in the Joy that that brings me. Amen

Today's Devotion was written by Pastor Art Bolstad

Wednesday September 9, 2020

Psalm 37:18-40

Turn Away from Evil and Do Good

In the beginning of Psalm 37, we hear about control, the things we try to control, and how we should not fret, but we should trust in God. If you have not yet, take a look at the devotion from the beginning of Psalm 37 from yesterday.

Yet we hear at the beginning of our reading for today in verse 20, that the wicked will perish. Hooray! We think of that and we rejoice a little bit, thinking that thought, "Ah, they are getting what they deserve now!"

Have you ever had that thought? I think I can take a good guess and say that most, if not all of us have thought that at one point or another. Whether it is the person who cut you off on the highway, or the person who snuck in the line before you and got the very last whatever you were in line for. But we often think about those things and think about the other people.

Today, I am giving you a chance to think selfishly. Now reading that you might be a little confused. But the selfish way I want to think today, is to look at how we can often times think more of ourselves and have those selfish thoughts and turn them to selfless thoughts.

We read in our psalm today many ways that we should live. Ways WE should live, not trying to critique others to how they should.

The righteous is generous and gives. The steps of a man are established by the Lord when he delights in his way. Turn away from evil and do good. The mouth of the righteous utters wisdom...the law of God is in his heart. The salvation of the righteous is from the Lord...The Lord helps them and delivers them.

We can look at these and look inward a bit today. Maybe we have not been as generous as we should be, maybe we have not done what is always good, maybe we have thought a bit too selfishly the past couple of days. Turn. Turn away from evil and do good. So today as we read and reread this psalm, we turn from evil and do good. Not because our salvation depends on it, but because our neighbor does. On you and I showing that love and care that the Lord shows to us, the love that took him to the cross for me and you.

Prayer - Gracious God, help me to put the needs of others before myself. Help me to live my life for you, my Lord and Savior. Not for the sake of my salvation, but for the sake of my neighbor. Remind me every day of who You are and what You have done for me. Amen.

Today's Devotion was written by Seminary Student Chris Deneen

September 10, 2020

Read Psalm 38

Help Me, O Lord, My Salvation

Perhaps one could tell a thousand instances of a terrified conscience, such as, “I could have told the truth and was going to, but instead, I let someone else take the blame for my actions, I feel horrible, I have sinned!”

We should confess our sins to those we sin against and to God because of Christ’s righteousness and forgiveness for us. Yet I find confession hard to do, in fact, I cannot repent, believe, or do good works because of sin in my heart. I need help, Lord Jesus.

How many times does “help me Lord,” “help me God,” help me Jesus,” pour out of our hearts? Too much or too little?

David, in terror of his sin, and through faith in the LORD, confesses, **“There is no soundness in my flesh because of Your indignation; there is no health in my bones because of my sin. (v. 4) . . . I am feeble and crushed; I groan because of the tumult of my heart. (v. 8) . . . But for you, O LORD, do I wait; it is you, O Lord my God, who will answer. (v.. 15) . . . I confess my iniquity; I am sorry for my sin” (v. 18).**

Philip Melanchthon writes in the *Apology (defense) of the Augsburg Confession*:

“We say that contrition is the true terror of conscience, which feels that God is angry with sin and grieves that it has sinned. This contrition takes place when sins are condemned by God’s Word. . . . The Gospel, in which the forgiveness of sins is freely promised concerning Christ, should be presented to consciences in these terrors. They should believe that, for Christ’s sake, their sins are freely forgiven” (Apology, XII:29, 35).

Prayer - O LORD God, when I am weak, You are strong. **“Make haste to help me, O Lord, my salvation!”** Forgive me freely for the sake of Christ Jesus who paid for our sin on the cross and rose from the dead on the third day for our justification. Amen.

Today’s Devotion was written by Pre-seminary Student Nathan Tritch

Friday, September 11
Read Psalm 39

Feeling Small

Last weekend, I went for a long hike in Elephant Rocks State Park. It's a beautiful wilderness area named after a line of pink, multi-ton granite rocks that resemble a line of elephants. Looking out from the top of these huge rocks over miles and miles of forest took my breath away, and as I considered how vast and marvelous God's creation is, I have to admit, I felt quite small.

This is the humble feeling that David writes about in today's psalm. He says:

**"O Lord, make me know my end and what is the measure of my days.
Let me know how fleeting I am!
Behold you have made my days as handbreadths
And my lifetime is as nothing before You.
Surely, all mankind stands as a mere breath!"**

David is asking for the humility to know his standing in the world. Even a great king will one day die, and all of his earthly work will pass away.

There is no way around this reality. We can fight against it and try to "**heap up wealth**" to make ourselves feel like we are something. Or we can look to the Creator, Who is all in all. Even though we are nothing before Him, He has looked upon us with favor. Despite our sin, God became man and dwelt among us. The Creator of the universe died and rose again for *us*. Knowing how little we are reveals how great the love of God is in Christ Jesus and how precious we are in His sight

Prayer - Heavenly Father and Creator of all things, we thank You for Your beautiful creation and that You have created us in Your image. We thank You even more that You have come to us and been made man and humbled Yourself to death, even death on a cross for the sake of we who are nothing. Teach us to number our days so that we might gain wisdom in our heart. Teach us humility so that as we value ourselves less, we value You more. We pray this in the name of the One Who valued us even above His own life, Amen.

Today's Devotion was written by Seminary Student Case Farney

Saturday September 12

Read [Psalm 40](#)

“All Over the Place”

Have you ever run into someone that had everything happen to them that day and it was all so overwhelming that it just blew their socks off and then the thing on their car went “ka-blooney” and what does that even mean and then they heard the sad news about Sam and it just hit them in the gut and knocked all the air out of them and...

Sometimes, life is like that. You have one of those days where you find yourself “all over the place”. In today’s Psalm, I doubt David is writing about a single day, but he describes every category of thing that can happen to a Christian. He “**waits for the LORD...and He drew me up from the pit of destruction**”. After setting David solidly on a rock, “**He put a...song of praise**” in his mouth.

When David thought his offerings or sacrifices weren’t enough, he was reminded that “burnt offering and sin offering You have not required”. And this reminder of God’s free, merciful gift of righteousness and salvation leads David to the Temple, where he told of God’s deliverance to everyone in “the great congregation.”

When evils surround him and the effects of his sin pile up, threatening to overtake him, his “**heart fails him**”. Again, he prays for deliverance from “**those who seek to snatch away**” his life and “**delight in his hurt**”.

Where is God in all these normal, human encounters? When everything’s going your way; or when it’s not? When trouble is behind every corner, when you feel like you can never measure up? Where is God when you’re “all over the place”?

He’s there – with you. Whether your day is going great – the best ever! Or you just want to go back to bed and start over – tomorrow – God is there with you. When you’re down, He comforts and cares for you. When you’re so overjoyed you can’t think of how to rejoice, He fills you with the words to the Magnificat.

Prayer - Immanuel, Praise be to You for being “with me” through everything. Great are You, LORD! Amen.

Today’s Devotion was written by Pastor Jeff Nelson

Monday September 14, 2020
Read Psalm 41

Nowhere Else to Go

In reading Psalm 41, I was reminded of the comment by Abraham Lincoln: "I have been driven many times upon my knees by the overwhelming conviction that I had nowhere else to go." David is suffering from illness which is evident as others comment that **"a deadly thing is poured out on him; he will not rise again from where he lies."** Obviously, this is not just seasonal allergies. David is facing a life-threatening illness of some sort.

To make matters worse, illness is not the only pain he is enduring. His enemies are downright giddy at the prospect of David's demise. They imagine filling the void that King David's death will create. **"All who hate me whisper together about me; they imagine the worst for me."** This is an evil impulse that many are tempted towards in relation to their political opponents. Yet David's enemies include his friends. **"Even my close friend in whom I trusted, who ate my bread, has lifted his heel against me."** With friends like these, who needs enemies?

What is David's response? **"But you, O Lord, be gracious to me."** Lincoln's wisdom above seems an echo of David's attitude. When everything else fails, we recognize we have nowhere else to go. The truth is that we may imagine that we have the ability to make it on our own strength, cleverness or ability. Yet even these have been gifts from God. There is nothing we accomplish apart from His gracious giving, and it is a painful blessing in suffering that sometimes we only see His provision when pain and loss leave us nowhere else to go.

As the hymn puts it, *"When every earthly prop gives way, He then is all my hope and stay. On Christ the solid rock I stand, All other ground is sinking sand."* Many people, abilities and possessions in this life are incredible blessings from God, but they all make lousy foundations, except for Christ Jesus. There is nowhere else to go.

Prayer – Lord, please use my times of trial to help me see Your gracious work in and through all times. In Jesus name. Amen.

Today's Devotion was written by Pastor Jason

Tuesday September 15, 2020
Read Psalm 42

Seeing God Clearly

Some days are happy, and everything seems bright. You can feel the closeness to God, you just know that all is right. But everyone has other days - days when you see the darkness in the world, when you feel like you have dark glasses on, nothing is going right, and you are left asking, "Where is God?"

When things are dark - we aren't asking the question out of doubt, no rather it is more of a complexity. Look, I know God; I see Him in church and in His Word. No, it is perplexing: to God and His promises - to be there with me, to support me - but in dark times it is hard to see fulfillment of His promises. I see the evil in the world, seemingly powerful, blinding me to God. Seeing the world, I lose sight of God's activity and begin to ponder the lack in my vision.

And yet this is when I see God the clearest. When the world is doing its worst; when this life shows me to be powerless - ah, then I can see God acting. Then when I can do nothing, when I can see the uselessness of all my efforts; then I know my salvation comes from God. It has to, it surely can't come from me! The light shining in the darkness is brightest!

That Church going, that Bible reading is my staff holding me up when the world is too dark, for there I see the light. There I am reminded that God keeps His promises - and that He has promised to ward me, even in the darkest times.

Prayer: Please dear Lord, remind me to simply trust you. Don't let the darkness days get me down; rather raise me up, build my confidence. Thank you for your promise that you will indeed do just exactly that. Amen.

Today's Devotion was written by Pastor Art Bolstad

Wednesday September 16, 2020

Read Psalm 43

Light in the Darkness

“For you are the God in whom I take refuge;” What a wonderful thing we here about God in the second verse of Psalm 43. This idea of God being our fortress isn’t a new thought, but it is one we know quite well. A Mighty Fortress is our God! In him we take refuge! But then our psalmist takes this turn and says, “Why have you rejected me?”

When someone is looking for refuge, a safe place, a place to feel welcomed and comforted, this is the last thing they would want. For a lighthearted example today, it would be as if you are out on a walk, and all of a sudden it starts pouring rain. You go to a nearby house to ask for a place to get out of the rain. But they say no, and you are left out in the rain, the cold, and the darkness. But our God doesn’t leave us out in the rain and darkness, we read on and we hear the pleas of the psalmist, and the pleas of our own hearts as they cry out to God.

“Send out your light and your truth; let them lead me.” Darkness is an interesting topic. It’s one of the ideas that we hear about quite often, but not just darkness, normally we end up hearing about its counterpart, light. If you’ve ever walked around your house in the middle of the night, you might know how dark darkness can actually be. If you have no lights, or the power is out, that darkness can envelop rooms, almost entire houses at times!

But then just a bit of light, just a flicker, a small nightlight in the corner, it takes the darkness and it splits it. It gives you something to look towards, something to at least be able to give you a little bit of familiarity. Just a little light, can do all that. That light which God sends to us isn’t just a flicker of a light, it isn’t just a little night light, it is a full blown all the lights on, all on at once, and piercing to the darkness! We can sometimes feel stuck in the dark, but our God gives us that light, He brings light to the darkness, so that we may come to Him!

So when we are feeling down, sad, distraught, left in the darkness, turn to the light, the light of God, and as the Psalmist says to our downcast souls, and even to us at times, **“Hope in God; for I shall again praise him, my salvation and my God.”**

Prayer - Gracious Lord, giver of all God things, thank you. Thank you for giving us your light, helping us to see You even in the darkest of nights. Help us to turn to You, and find our refuge, strength, salvation, and light from the darkness. Amen.

Today’s Devotion was written by Seminarian Chris Deneen

September 17, 2020

Read Psalm 44

For the Sake of Your Mercy

This psalm of lament and national crisis sung by the Israelites cries for God's help in their distress after suffering defeat by their enemies. In Israel's (Jacob's) lament, they praise God for past triumphs, layout their current defeat and its results, plea their innocence, and pray for God's help, **"For our soul is bowed down to the dust; our belly clings to the ground. Rise up; come to our help! Redeem us for the sake of Your [mercy] steadfast love!"** (v.26).

Sin separated man from the LORD God in the garden when Adam and Eve disobeyed God's Word by eating from the tree that He told them not to. This separation of our sin causes an eternal result of pain, death, suffering, distress, weakness, oppression, and other dark lamentable consequences. Yet, in the eternal light of God's favor and promise, for the sake of His lovingkindness, the eternal Son of God, our Lord Jesus Christ, redeemed us to Himself forever by His death and resurrection.

As God's chosen people, we will suffer and be persecuted in the world for confessing the Holy Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, and it may seem like defeat by the enemy who constantly attacks and wounds the saints. God in Christ Jesus crushed the enemies head as promised (Gen. 3:15) on the cross bringing us redemption and the forgiveness of sins. So, we, the Bride of Christ, cry and lament in distress to our King and Redeemer whose victory over the power of sin, death, and all evil brought us freedom and victory over the law of sin, death, and Satan.

Sometimes it may not seem like victory and more like defeat as the psalmist cries, **"Yet for your sake we are killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered"** (v. 22; Rom. 8:36). The Apostle Paul writes by the breath of the Holy Spirit, **"For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord"** (Rom. 8:38-39).

Prayer - "Father of all mercy, we thank You for sending Your Son into our flesh to redeem us for Yourself. For the sake of His obedience and suffering, grant us forgiveness of all our sins and shortcomings, and keep us from the evil, as Your Son, our Lord, prayed for us. Amen." (*Reading the Psalms with Luther*, Psalm 44).

Today's Devotion was written by Pre-seminary Student Nathan Tritch

Friday September 18, 2020
Read Psalm 45

An Overflowing Heart

This Psalm begins with the words "**My heart is stirred by a good word**". The Psalmist is so pleased by what he is about to describe that he feels it in the depth of his soul. Surely, we've all been moved to the core by inspiring words or a dramatic story or a really exciting event. For the Psalmist, nothing could be more exciting than the wedding of this handsome young man and his beautiful bride. As we keep reading, it becomes clear that this is none other than Christ and His Church. So wonderful is this union that it cuts to the core of anyone who tells the story.

When we consider how God has come Himself to save His people, how He has clothed her with beautiful robes, and how He will live with her forever in love, how can we help feeling awestruck? Just like the disciples on the road to Emmaus when Jesus appeared to them and explained the Old Testament, our hearts burn within us when we consider the things that the Lord has done for us.

Prayer - Heavenly Father, we thank You for all the good You have done for us and all the good You do for us each day. Ignite our hearts with the glorious story of the redemption won for us by Jesus Christ. Give us wisdom to know how broad and how deep and how long and how high Your love is for us. Help us to keep our eyes trained on You, the bridegroom who has come to make us holy and will come again to dwell with us forever, to be our God as we are Your people. Stir up our hearts to share this good word with those around us, and keep us in your abounding peace. Through Your Son, our Lord, Amen.

Today's Devotion was written by Seminary Student Case Farney

Saturday September 19

Read [Psalm 46](#)

“A Mighty Fortress”

Everyone knows that when the 98 pound weakling shows up as a freshman in high school, it will be his end. Not knowing anyone, looking “different”, and generally being a “dork”, it won’t take long for the school bullies to have their way with him. Except. His big brother is the tall, muscular, popular, wide receiver on the football team. Who was homecoming king last year. And has promised his little brother “No one will lay a hand on you or their life is over!” Everything goes great for the little brother (until next year when big brother goes away to college).

Maybe, as an adult, you took comfort in living in the only superpower in the world. America – no one can touch us! Until 9/11, when a small group of men struck terror into the hearts of America, as we instantly became aware there were people who hate us enough to commit suicide to attack us.

In the 15th century, when Martin Luther wrote “A Mighty Fortress Is Our God”, the commonly understood enemy of man was that “devils all the world should fill, all eager to devour us”. Today, maybe because we’re “too smart” to believe in devils, or maybe because mankind itself has become more demonic, it seems now we’re our own worst enemy.

So, while **“the mountains be moved into the heart of the sea”** and **“the nations rage, the kingdoms totter”**, “no strength of ours can match his (the devil’s) might”. While COVID kills thousands, unemployment turns many to despair, terror still threatens us, and our own government can’t agree on how to help, we need a refuge. A big, strong brother to protect us.

“But for us fights the valiant One, Whom God Himself elected.” Jesus is that brother and was willing to give His life for us! He died to bring you into His family, the **“city of God, the holy habitation of the Most High”**. This is the Almighty God who, when **“He utters His voice, the earth melts.”** Twice, in the Psalm, we’re reminded, **“The LORD of hosts is with us”**.

Check out [2 Kings 19:35](#). Those “hosts” that our Big Brother is LORD of are His army of angels. When Jesus was arrested in the Garden of Gethsemane, He told Peter to put away his sword. If He wanted, Jesus said, He could call down 12 legions of angels (about 72,000!) to fight for Him. (In 2 Kings, one lone angel struck down 185,000 of Israel’s enemies. While they slept).

“God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.” This is what He’s been doing since before the beginning of time. He’ll continue to be our “Mighty Fortress” through our present troubles.

Prayer - Heavenly Father, help me to “be still and know that You are God”. Through Your Son and my Brother, Jesus. Amen.

Today’s Devotion was written by Pastor Jeff Nelson

Monday September 21, 2020
Read Psalm 47

Clap your Hands, All Peoples!

A reason for universal joy. That's what is pictured in Psalm 47. That sounds incredibly enticing as our fractured world and nation find fewer things to rejoice over together, and the rest of this year seems to be as contentious (or more so!) than the rest of the year has been.

We need a reason for universal joy. Of course, the declaration of the Psalm is that we don't have to wait for it. No peace plan, preferred election outcome, reform package, or perfect Supreme Court nomination is needed. Those all have their place in the temporal affairs of the world. But we have a supreme reason for joy that stands above the time bound affairs that consume all the oxygen on the nightly news: **"God has gone up with a shout, the Lord with the sound of a trumpet."**

From our perch in time, the words of Psalm 47 turn our eyes to the seemingly odd occurrence of Jesus' Ascension into heaven. We might be tempted to despair at the notion of Christ "leaving," but Psalm 47 gives us the proper perspective. The phrase **"God has gone up"** refers to what the psalm says clearly in verse 8, **"God sits on the throne."**

Here is a reason for joy: Christ ascends to rule over all things! He rules over heaven and earth, life and death, present and future. Yes, the One who **"loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God"** (Eph 5:2), that's who **"reigns over the nations"** and **"is the King of all the earth."** There is no greater reason for joy and optimism in all creation. Christ, the Lord of mercy and grace, sits on the throne for us.

Prayer – Lord Jesus, in our contentious and changing world, strengthen me in the assurance that You rule over Your church in love, you preside over all things, and, unlike the kingdoms of this world, Your merciful reign will never end. Amen.

Today's Devotion was written by Pastor Jason

Tuesday September 22, 2020

Read Psalm 48

Zion We Are

Zion, the city of God. What a wonderful picture - a picture of our citizenship. In these times of conflict, it is good to remember that our true citizenship is with God - part of the city of God.

We live in the mountain of God's holiness - a purity we acquire only through the salvation we get from Jesus Christ, God Himself. The trust He builds within us, the faith He gives us to trust Him and His death and resurrection to make me right with God, that faith makes us God's children, opens our eyes to see the disgusting nature of sin (and our former participation), and fills our hearts with the joy of being part of Him.

Zion, our home, is a refuge from troubles. We can see here the totality of God's power and majesty. The forces and results of nature are His; what He does makes all things beautiful - and we live among them. All those who try to ignore God, the so-called powers of the world, all fear and tremble at the forces of "nature" (which God creates and controls)!

Consider the church God has established. Oh, not our human organizations, but the assembly of all of God's people. How they have a fellowship surpassing our human-only ties! How the Bible, the Word of God, changes the hearts of those receiving those words. How God acknowledges our material nature with the promise of acting through the sacraments - promises we receive while living.

Zion it is, Zion we are. Thank you Lord Jesus.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, thank you for making me part of your city. Thank you for your church and our life in You, not only in heaven but here on earth as well. Again, thank you!

Today's Devotion was written by Pastor Art Bolstad

Wednesday September 23, 2020

Read Psalm 49

Ransomed

Today's Psalm, Psalm 49, when you read through it, may seem quite odd. It doesn't necessarily sound like a "normal" psalm. This is considered a wisdom psalm, and thus it is one where the psalmist is calling upon those who are hearing or reading it to listen closely!

Looking at the first section in this psalm from verses 5-9, we hear this question asked, of why should I fear? There's sinners around me, and many are trusting in their riches! But yet, riches will only get you so far. In verse 7, we read no man can ransom another or give to God the price of his life.

Ransom is one of the many metaphors that we have that can help us to understand the Gospel a little better. When we hear something like this, we look and see, that it is indeed the case, that we can't pay the ransom for our sins. The price is too high for you or me to pay! There's no way that we could pay that ransom.

When we think of ransom, you might think of movies or something like that where you have heard of it. It is where there needs to be a payment for the safety and freedom of someone. And amidst all of the language of death, worry, perishing, there comes a glimmer, a sparkle, a moment of hope.

Turn back to verse 15, and read it again.

"But God will ransom my soul from the power of Sheol, for he will receive me."

What a wondrous sentence that is. You and I alone, would be stuck in our sins, enslaved, not knowing freedom. But thanks be to God, because of the ransom that is paid through Christ's death and resurrection! And amidst a psalm where we might scratch our heads and wonder what is going on, we can see that hope that we have. Not in the things of this world, but the hope in Christ. The hope and the knowledge that Christ has freed us from the bondage of sin.

Prayer - Gracious Lord, Almighty God, thank you that you sent your Son to pay for my sins. Help me to repent of my ways and turn back to you and away from my sinful ways. Help me to strive to live a pure life for you, knowing that you have given me freedom from sin, death, and the devil. Amen.

Today's Devotion was written by Seminarian Chris Deneen

Thursday September 24, 2020

Read Psalm 50

God Shines Forth

When the word “shines” comes to mind, what are your first thoughts? The sun, moon, stars, lights, glass, mirror, kitchen, bathroom, shoes, cars, wheels, tires, metal, buildings, paint, teeth, and hair? Well, sure, but these are not the “shine” God speaks of through Asaph in Psalm 50.

The LORD judges and “shines” in power and mercy in His Church, calling us to repentance and faith, **“The Mighty One, God the LORD, speaks and summons the earth from the rising of the sun to its setting. Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God shines forth . . . He calls to the heavens above and to the earth, that He may judge His people”** (vv. 1-2, 4). Asaph spoke God’s judgment on Israel’s heartless actions in their offerings and sacrifices to the LORD God.

Reformer Philip Melanchthon writes, “The people in the Law [the Israelites] imitated sacrifices with the opinion that by means of these works they would appease God...We see here how earnestly the prophets rebuke the people: Ps. 50:8: I will not reprove thee for thy sacrifices, and Jer. 7:22: I spake not unto your fathers concerning burnt offerings. Such passages condemn not works, which God certainly had commanded as outward exercises in this government, but they condemn the godless opinion according to which they thought that by these works they appeased the wrath of God” (*Apology [Defense] of the Augsburg Confession*, V:86).

What’s the point? God’s Word has a “shine” that often sheds light on the true darkness of our sinful hearts, **“Mark this, then, you who forget God, lest I tear you apart, and there be none to deliver!** (v. 22), showing we need deliverance and salvation! God’s Word continues; **“The one who offers thanksgiving as his sacrifice glorifies Me; to one who orders his way rightly I will show the salvation of God!”** (v. 23). Who can do this rightly but God alone?

The LORD says, **“I am God, your God . . . call upon Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify Me”** (v. 15). God’s mercy and favor “shines” forth in Christ crucified and risen for you and me, calling all to see **“the salvation of God!”**

Prayer - LORD God of heaven and earth, shine forth and reform our hearts from all godlessness so that we may rightly give thanks and praise to You. For, Your grace and mercy are freely given on account of Christ Jesus for the forgiveness of sins quickening our hearts and creating us anew in His righteousness. Amen.

Today’s Devotion was written by Pre-seminary Student Nathan Tritch

Friday September 25, 2020
Read Psalm 51

Day by Day

It's hard to say something new about the fifty-first psalm. We've heard the beautiful poetry of David's lament echoed in every confession and absolution. Very many of our services begin with verse 15: "**O Lord open my lips, and my mouth will declare your praise.**" It seems that we have trouble coming to God in worship without these words of David. The reason isn't hard to figure out, just as verse 3 says, "**our sin is ever before us.**"

As Christians, we know that we sin every day, that we were even born in sin. With this in mind, we are always coming to God and confessing. We know that God can make us clean, no matter how often we make ourselves filthy with sin. We have the privilege of bringing our sin before God not only when He claims us at baptism or when we receive the Lord's Supper but every moment of our lives. And we know that as often as we live a life of sin and repentance, even more often does God forgive us.

Through the death of Jesus Christ, we have been purged of our sins and washed so that we are white as snow. By His blood, God has blotted out our iniquities. Because Christ was forsaken on the cross, God has not forsaken us nor has He taken His Spirit from us. Instead, He upholds us by His Spirit day after day, creating in us clean hearts. Each day, we bring God the sacrifices of our hearts and spirits broken and crushed under the weight of our sin and He points us to the ultimate sacrifice by which our sin is removed, and our hearts and spirits made whole.

Prayer - O God Who created all things and knows the hearts of all people, we come before You humbled at the weight of our sins. Even when we have tried our hardest, our best efforts have not been enough. We have sinned before you and offended you deeply and often. You have been merciful to us by giving Your Beloved Son, Jesus, to die in our place so that we might be fully cleansed from all of our many sins. Remind us in our every sin to think of our Savior. We know that Your mercy is new everyday but is at the same time constant. Let your love be our constant in this everchanging world. Open our mouths daily to declare Your praise, upholding us with your Holy Spirit. Through Your Precious Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord and Redeemer, Amen.

Today's Devotion was written by Seminarian Case Farney

Saturday September 26

Read [Psalm 52](#)

“Treachery vs. Love”

In case you’ve been living under a rock, hiding from the crazy world we live in, it’s been said, “America is divided”. You can be for one political side or the other, or just an undecided observer, but everyone is united in agreeing: we’re split. Whichever side you’ve chosen, you might believe that the other side is filled with liars, bigots, deceit, and slander. You might believe that, come the election (or some other day of reckoning), if your side wins, everything will be better. We’ll then be able to move on to peace, harmony, and unicorns. Deep down, though, you know that that’s just a fantasy (except the unicorns!). If this describes you, this Psalm is for you.

Political intrigue had been going on in Israel. While Israel was united under one king at this time, that king was convinced that his best general, David, was conspiring to take his throne. King Saul saw traitors behind every tree – his own son, Jonathan, had befriended David and (in his mind, anyway) betrayed him. So, his armies were scouring the countryside, pursuing David. Down to only a handful of loyal followers and out of food and weapons, David entered a synagogue for relief. The priest there, aware of God’s plan for David and of David’s faithfulness, gave him consecrated bread to sustain him and Goliath’s sword to support him.

Saul’s chief herdsman witnessed this and reported it to the king. He ordered the herdsman to kill all the priests and their families and the whole town, as an example to anyone who might consider supporting David.

If you were there, which side would you choose? Much like today, when caught between choosing between two sides of a human conflict, the choice can be difficult. Might? Or what’s right? Life, or death? Or, should I just ignore it and pretend I don’t see anything?

David knew where to turn. He complimented Doeg, the herdsman, on his “**mighty**” treachery. He admits that this man, and the wicked king he works for, both excel at doing evil. But David doesn’t turn to his own might, his popularity with the people, or his military skills for rescue. “**Why do you boast of evil, O mighty man? The steadfast love of God endures all the day.**”

David was unafraid of Saul. He stood in God’s house with His godly people, flourishing in the abundant garden of God’s favor. We, too, stand in that garden. Be good citizens – vote, pray, participate as you see proper – but for rescue? Turn to the Lord.

Lord God, King of the Universe,
**I will thank you forever,
because you have done it.
I will wait for your name, for it is good,
in the presence of the godly.** Amen.

Today’s Devotion was written by Pastor Jeff Nelson

Monday September 28, 2020
Read Psalm 53

Not Even One

There is no end to surveys. As the election approaches, surveys are published daily. Who will people vote for? What issues make a big difference? Survey after survey published with results presenting a plus or minus 3% margin of error.

As the Lord looks down from heaven, there is no margin of error for the holy, perfect God of the universe. His accounting is absolutely correct. **“God looks down from heaven on the children of man to see if there are any who understand, who seek after God. They have all fallen away; together they have become corrupt; there is none who does good, not even one.”**

We’d really like a recount. No one? Not even...one???

Nope. Not one.

This is why I found this recent survey result particularly disturbing. An extensive recent survey declared this, “Among Americans who consider themselves Christian, 52% believe they are saved by their good works rather than by faith in Christ as Savior.” Even with a 3% margin of error, half of the Christian in America trust in themselves, in their own good works.

Psalm 53 could not be clearer, **“there is none who does good, not even one.”** We are hopeless on our own. Every one of us. Our only hope is in the God who not only “looks down from heaven on the children of man,” but also came down from heaven and became a child. He alone is our hope. He alone is capable of rescuing us. He alone is truly good – for us and our salvation. Don’t count on yourself. Count on Christ alone.

Prayer – Dear Lord, I know that there is none who does good. I certainly do not live up to the perfect standard of your holiness. But Christ has. Forgive me for the sake of Jesus. By faith, count His righteousness as my own. In Jesus’ name. Amen.

Today’s Devotion was written by Pastor Jason

Tuesday September 29, 2020

Read Psalm 54

Troubled

The promises of God speak to my heart, because my heart is so often troubled. I experience the world. I hear the false notes of invitation, of terror, of abandonment. But with God I hear the love of One who cares for me, I hear reassurance that I am not alone, that all those troublings are not my concern but His!

And when I worry and wonder why He lets all this go on, He reminds me to rest on Him, not on my own powers (which are so worthless!). So, I turn in prayer "God help me!". There's no such thing as a poorly worded prayer for He sees my intentions and reads them rightly. There is assurance that He not only hears, but acts. He not only supports me protecting me from the world, but He acts on the World, quenching its attempts.

Yes, there are troubles out there; but I live in Christ, not in myself. I have the privilege of watching God turn back the evil I see, of seeing God's salvation working to free others from sin, to see God's justice clearing the world of those in rebellion against Him. True those who follow God are rescued in His love, while those who refuse Him, who attack Him and His people lose it all in failure. So those false notes I heard fail, but even in their failure they send me to my Lord, rejoicing in His Salvation. Praise the Lord!

Prayer: O God, You who answer prayer: listen to my troubles. Yes, solve them for me, but even more so: Let me always turn to you remembering that You can and will solve them. Let me trust in You through everything. In Jesus' name I pray.
Amen.

Today's Devotion was written by Pastor Art Bolstad

Wednesday September 30, 2020

Read Psalm 55

Want to Get Away?

Have you ever been there? In the same place as David in this psalm? At the beginning of this Psalm David is in some deep anguish. David is crying out to God, and then in verse 6 writes, **“Oh that I had wings like a dove! I would fly away and be at rest; yes, I would wander far away;”** Have you ever been there?

There has probably been a time in your life where you’ve experienced this. All you can do is cry out to God. You have something in your life that just hurts, tears you down, makes you weary, something that makes you just want to fly away and lodge in the wilderness. David continues in the psalm about his enemies. And in many other psalms, David writes that God is far away from him, that he doesn’t know where God is, or he feels as though God has left him.

But then in verse 16, after all of this lamenting, David writes this beautiful line,

“But I call to God and the Lord will save me. Evening and morning and at noon I utter my complaint and moan, and he hears my voice.”

Just as in other psalms David is lamenting to God, just as we do often times in our lives. But David reminds us, and is beyond thankful, that God hears him. **And God hears YOU!**

Burdens in our lives can come from anywhere. Work, family, school, jobs, need I go on? And these burdens can almost overtake us with worry, fear, or guilt at times. But then we see at the end of this psalm, in verse 22, **“Cast your burden on the Lord, and he will sustain you; he will never permit the righteous to be moved.”**

Where are your burdens in life? From where do they come? Cast them on the Lord. Throw them away, speak to God, for he hears you! Find time today to really sit down with God, and lay your burdens on Him. And why? Because he hears you, and will sustain and comfort you. Find that time today. Cast your burdens on the Lord.

Prayer: Gracious God, You know the burdens on our hearts and mind. Help us to come to you and lay those at your feet. Guide us, be with us, and sustain us through these burdens that we face in life. Amen.

Today’s Devotion was written by Seminarian Chris Deneen

Thursday, October 1, 2020

Read Psalm 56

God is For You

David trusted that God was for him when he was afraid and when his enemies attacked him, **“my enemies will turn back in the day when I call. This I know, that God is for me”** (Ps. 56:9). So also, everyone who trusts in God’s deliverance from evil, sin and death, believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. This I know, God is for you and me.

Jesus speaks powerful and authoritative words of light and life to our hearts, **“I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life”** (John 8:12). God’s Word brings faith, peace, hope, joy, light, and life for us in our sufferings and despair over sin and evil in and around us. Paul posed questions to the Romans over things of sin and death, and of life and light, **“What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?”** (Romans 8:31).

Paul continues in Romans, **“He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us”** (Rom. 8:32-34).

David trusted in Yahweh’s deliverance, **“For you have delivered my soul from death, yes, my feet from falling, that I may walk before God in the light of life”** (Ps. 56:13). God’s face shines upon us for the sake of Christ for the forgiveness of sins given for you and me so that we may walk according to the Spirit.

Prayer - LORD God, for the sake of Christ, You are for and with us as Jesus promised, “I am with you always to the end of the age.” Thank You, LORD, for giving us True light and life. In the Name of Jesus, “who indeed is interceding for us.” Amen.

Today’s Devotion was written by Pre-seminary Student Nathan Tritch

Friday, October 2, 2020

Read Psalm 57

God Who Fulfills His Purposes for Us

"**I cry out to God Most High, to God who fulfills his purpose for me.**" Over and over we see the refrains that are echoed through this Psalm. Cries to God for help and refuge. Prayers that the righteous be preserved and that the unrighteous would give way. What we see less often in the Psalms is God called "**God who fulfills his purpose for me.**" This phrase is actually only used in one other instance in the Bible, in Psalm 138, so it may not be a really familiar piece of our biblical vocabulary.

What exactly does David have in mind when he talks about God fulfilling his purpose for us? Maybe this passage from Jeremiah 29 comes to mind: "**I know the plans I have for you' declares the LORD, 'plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.**" There's a lot of comfort in that verse but if you're like me, sometimes our faith and trust in God isn't as strong as maybe it should be. Maybe we think "'A future and a hope'? Well that sounds awesome, God, but I would really feel a lot more comfortable if you would spell things out for me." It can be hard to give ourselves over to God when his ways and his plans are so different from ours and so unclear to us. Sometimes what God is doing doesn't make any sense to us at all. I'm sure there were times when David was afraid and didn't understand God's plan, but had to trust in him nevertheless.

Luckily for us, we know what David didn't. As David asks in verse 3, God does "**send from heaven to save**". He does "**put to shame him who tramples on me.**" God answers David's prayer in an infinitely greater way than David could have imagined. Rather than merely providentially thwarting David's persecutors, God miraculously sent his Son from heaven to save us. By his glorious death and resurrection, Jesus puts to shame the devil and our sinful nature that always trample us down. They are no match for the one in whom our souls take refuge. We do not know every detail of God's purpose for us, but we know the big picture: God has given us hope and a future to live with him now and forever.

Prayer - God Most High, we come before you to humbly thank you that you have given us hope in Jesus Christ. We know that as far as the heavens are above the earth, so your holy thoughts are above ours. Teach us to trust in your ways and judgments, for you work all things for good for those who trust in you. Strengthen our faith that we might also trust in you, taking refuge in the shadow of your wings when we are scared or anxious. Fulfill your purposes in us and through us to the glory of your Holy Name. We ask all of this and whatever else you see that we need in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Today's Devotion was written by Seminarian Case Farney

Saturday October 3

Read [Psalm 58](#)

“Judges”

Just two weeks ago, we were reminded of how much importance is placed on our Supreme Court as Ruth Bader Ginsberg died and the fight over her replacement began. After all, judges decide matters of life and death and answer questions like “what is a human right?” One of the critical questions to help choose a new judge (this time or any time) is, “what motivates this person?” Is it personal likes and dislikes, political ideology, or ideally – a pure, altruistic sense of justice? We place tremendous trust in these individuals but, over the years, we’ve often discovered that what we expected a judge to do is not what he or she actually did.

O.J. Simpson, the former NFL record-setter, was tried for murder in a sensational trial, now 25 years ago. America stayed glued to their televisions to watch the spectacle unfold – “if the glove does not fit, you must acquit!” and other dialogue from the trial entered our common language. Also, the belief was nurtured that, if you were rich and famous, you could get away with murder.

In today’s America, there is a sense of fear, distrust, and powerlessness in the face of people with immense wealth who use their power to carry out their will on the rest of us. Whether it be “tech giants”, the media, politicians, or celebrities, it seems their voices carry over our own. In today’s Psalm, King David bewails this condition (it turns out, our experience is nothing new).

He points to the powerful of his day, “**you gods**” who judge others according to the evil that fills their hearts. These are people who have departed from God at birth, speaking lies from their infancy. Not only do they have “**venom like...that of a serpent**”, their craftiness inspires these snakes to outwit the “snake charmer” by stopping their ears so they can’t even hear his voice. And so, said David, “**you devise wrongs; your hands deal out violence on earth.**”

Human leaders who have God in their hearts, instead of this kind of emptiness, are rare. Whether a person is the President of the United States or is simply responsible for cleaning up rooms in a hospital, when given power, that power attempts to turn people from God and toward their own selfish desires.

But we have a Judge, Who emptied Himself and became one like us. Even though He was sinless, He judged Himself guilty on our behalf, so that while He died on the cross for our sin, we might live. And so, “**Mankind will say, “Surely there is a reward for the righteous; surely there is a God who judges on earth.”**

Prayer - Heavenly Father, fill the hearts of our leaders with Your love so they may do Your will. And fill our hearts with peace, knowing that Jesus rules over us. In His Name, Amen.

Today’s Devotion was written by Pastor Jeff Nelson

Monday October 5, 2020

Read Psalm 59

Morning Comes

“Each evening they come back, howling like dogs and prowling about the city.” Twice David describes his dilemma in these words. His enemies have him surrounded. They are arrogantly stalking him each and every evening.

You may not have enemy armies closing in around you every time that the sun goes down, but your enemies surround you. Despair and depression may press in with a darkness as real as night. Sin and temptation stalk your every movement. The clever enemy Satan **“prowls about like a roaring lion seeking whom he can destroy (1 Peter 5:8).”**

David’s answer is your answer. **“But I will sing of your strength; I will sing aloud of your steadfast love in the morning.”** Even in the face of adversity, we have confidence in our Lord who is greater than our enemies. Darkness has its moment, but there is an end to the darkness. In the morning, the light eradicates the darkness. The mercy, love and strength of Christ subdues our enemies.

Your darkness is real, but it will not win the day. Your fortress is the One who has defeated sin and death and will bring you through to the morning.

Prayer – **“O my strength, I will sing praises to you, for you, O God, are my fortress, the God who shows me steadfast love.”**

Today’s Devotion was written by Pastor Jason

Tuesday October 6, 2020

Read Psalm 60

How Can it Be?

How, when God is in control, when He sent His own Son to die in my place, how can He now let the devil, the world, and even my own nature war against me? I remember His promises, promises that He has good for me - but all I can see are my troubles. Why O Lord, do I not see Your acting for me?

And yet ... I see your power in the world! Your power displayed in smashing natural events - hurricanes, earthquakes, sunrises, the ocean, the growth of plants and animals. I see it, I know it is real. Give me your strength of Lord, strength to apply what I see to myself.

Lord, You do remind me. You put all those powers out there, to remind me that you do indeed act, and that your actions succeed. You came for me (and all the others), You came and died that I might live, that I might live this life in You. It is not knowledge that I lack. I know the truth; but rather I lack confidence in myself, in my trusting of You. Give me that trust, please, that I might witness to your presence, power, and support

There too lies your promise! I didn't make up my mind, You gave me that trust. I couldn't do even that much, but You gave me faith. So I turn to You again, asking You to hold me, build up my trust, my faith - And you will and do!

Prayer: Lord Jesus, make my heart to learn to look at You and not the world. Build my faith, bring to my mind all that You do. In your name do I ask. Amen

Today's devotion was written by Pastor Art Bolstad

Wednesday October 7, 2020

Read Psalm 61

A Good Cry Heard

Have you ever just needed a good cry? Have you ever just needed to vent and get something off of your chest? That seems to be what David is doing here at the beginning of Psalm 61. He prays, “**Hear my cry**, O God, listen to my prayer; from the end of the earth I call to you when **my heart is faint**.” The end of the earth seems pretty far away, and yet that is where David cries out from. He feels that distant from the people around him. His heart is faint, and all he can muster up is to cry out to God.

And when David is calling out to God asking him to hear his cry, it is not as if God isn't listening to him, or that he won't listen, but he is reaching out to God. And we do this as well, whenever we pray, we call out to God, and although at times it might feel as though He doesn't hear, He does. God always has an ear out for His people.

Now I wasn't around during the medieval times, back in the times of Kings and Queens, castles, warriors, jousting all of that, but I've seen movies, and have been to the Renaissance Festival. Paul cries out to God and asks for Him to be His strong tower. In other places we hear the word fortress. So we may not have known what some of these old castles and fortresses looked like, but we can still see remnants of them today.

These gigantic fortresses. These huge castles made of stone. These impenetrable fortresses. These wonderful man-made structures. These fortresses are wonderful and in battle they stood the test of man, weather, and time. And yet none of those fortresses, can compare or match up to our God. The true fortress that we abide in, the fortress that gives us strength and comfort. That fortress, our God, will never be bested in battle. His fortress will reign forever. Take heart, the fortress of the Almighty and All-Powerful God is yours.

Prayer – Gracious and Almighty God, thank you for being my fortress. Defend me from my enemies, those who would see me fall. Grant me your grace, courage, and peace, to make it through the day. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Today's Devotion was written by Seminarian Chris Deneen

Thursday October 8, 2020

Read Psalm 62

Trust and Power

With all the noise of the world today, how do we trust in God at all times? Trust is confident, bold, safe, secure, and sure, not wavering or doubting. Trust hopes in the promises of God.

We cannot help but see the enemy scheming and plotting evil against us in the world. Yet, the psalmist boldly and confidently confesses: **“For God alone my soul waits in silence; from Him comes my salvation. He alone is my rock and my salvation, my fortress; I shall not be greatly shaken”** (vv. 1-2).

Often, we put trust in ourselves, our wavering faith, our strength, our works, our pleasures and desires, which always fall short of the glory of God. If we do not have the power, then who does? Well, the psalmist writes, **“Once God has spoken; twice have I heard this: that power belongs to God”** (v. 11). Yes!

God’s Word reveals this applies to Christ, **“For He who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one source . . . ‘I will put my trust in him’”** (Hebrews 2:11). So, let us rejoice and sing with the saints in the eternal Gospel of Christ, **‘Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God’** (Revelation 19:1).

In Christ alone, we have forgiveness of sins. We have stillness and silence trusting and resting in the power of God alone; **“Trust in Him at all times, O people; pour out your heart before Him; God is a refuge for us”** (v. 8).

Prayer - In You, God rests our salvation and hope. For, You are I AM, grant us rest and silence from temporal adversities, that we may trust in You at all times, for the sake of Your lovingkindness in Jesus Christ alone. Amen

Today’s Devotion was written by Pre-seminary Student Nathan Tritch

Friday October 9, 2020

Read Psalm 63

Hunger for God

The image that David uses in this Psalm over and over is hunger and thirst. There aren't many experiences that are as common to us as people as being hungry or thirsty. Even for those of us who have always had more than enough food and clean water on demand, we know the basic biological feeling of our body being in need.

We don't really have the choice of knowing when our body craves nourishment, but it may be harder to discern when we've been neglecting our spiritual needs. We're familiar with Jesus' rebuke to the devil's temptation: "**man does not live by bread alone, but by every word which proceeds from the mouth of the LORD.**" But how often do we remind ourselves just how reliant on God we are for our lives. As Paul said, "In Him we live and move and have our being." God is both our provision and our Provider.

In our nearsighted culture, we may feel proud that we are able to work and provide for ourselves and our families and there's nothing wrong with that, but even King David who had the wealth to provide for many reminds us that God is our true breadwinner. God not only gives us our daily bread for our physical health, but also has given to us the Living Bread for our spiritual health. Without Jesus, the Living Bread, we would starve "**as in a dry and weary land where there is no water**", our sins would overwhelm us and make us wither to nothing. But because Christ has come to us to be with us, our souls are "**satisfied as with fat and rich food**" and we have eternal life.

Prayer - Living Bread, we thank you that you provide us our daily bread to sustain our bodies. Teach our souls to long for You so that we might be sustained to eternal life. In the name of Christ, Amen.

Today's Devotion was written by Seminarian Case Farney

Saturday October 10

Read [Psalm 64](#)

“Marked”



Have you ever felt that, as a Christian, you have a big target painted on your back? That when you're in a large crowd of people, something just screams out to everyone that you alone are different and should be picked on? All the world knows that Christians are supposed to **“turn the other cheek”**, and some of them take advantage of this at every opportunity. Even friends and others who know you think of you as “Miss Goody Two-Shoes” and treat you differently.

Jesus Himself warns us that, in these Last Days, **“Indeed, the hour is coming when whoever kills you will think he is offering service to God.”** I doubt that any of us have encountered this degree of persecution, but we are marked as easy and deserving targets by some around us.

If you drive around town for a half hour, you will undoubtedly drive past at least one deer that met its end on the road. Like Christians, deer seem to have targets painted on them, daring drivers to “come and hit me!” This past week, during one of my COVID walks in the park, I discovered a pair of albino deer. From a hundred feet away, through the woods, these brilliant white animals shouted out for attention. The absence of all pigmentation creates a white that is absolutely un-natural.

If the fate of a normal deer is to be hit and killed on the road, what can an albino deer expect? Any predator can see it from a distance, its eyesight is probably diminished from that of a normal deer, and because of all this, it's going to be smaller and more vulnerable. So, what did God do for these two deer?

He gave them guardian angels. Two “normal” adult does, probably one of them the mother, are with the white deer all the time, caring and guiding them to food and safety. And, hunters – both human and animal – aren’t allowed in the Arnold City Park. These two beautiful, special creatures of God are perhaps more safe than are “normal” deer.

And how much more precious in His sight are God’s People? The Psalmist says of our enemies, **“But God shoots his arrow at them; they are wounded suddenly. They are brought to ruin, with their own tongues turned against them.”** Yes, we are “marked”. We are covered in the white robes of righteousness, given us by Jesus. We stand out from the darkness of the world because the light of Christ shines forth from us.

Prayer - Heavenly Father, as You guard and protect us, make all brothers and sisters in Christ stand out as beacons of Your Hope for the world. In Jesus Name, Amen.

Today’s Devotion was written by Pastor Jeff Nelson

Monday October 12, 2020

Read Psalm 65

Our Only Hope

We often speak about the large difference between Biblical hope and hope in the world around us. The world hopes the weather will be nice this upcoming weekend (so do I with outdoor confirmation on Sunday!). The world hopes the Cardinals will actually find a few more guys who can hit before next season. The world hopes for the right outcome in the election, and then hopes that the “right” choice actually helps. All these hopes are little more than wishes.

The Biblical hope is different. It is certainty in what will happen in the future for our good because it is based on Christ. He does not make campaign promises, He makes real ones, that is ones that will always come to pass. They are guarantees, not wishes.

David speaks of hope a little differently in Psalm 65. **“O God of our salvation, the hope of all the ends of the earth and of all the farthest seas.”** Hope is a person. All true hope is found in God. Think about that, **“the hope of all the ends of the earth.”** He is the hope of all humanity. Every other source of hope will be found wanting, will be insufficient, will let you down in one way or another.

Not so the Lord. He is your hope and the hope of all the ends of the earth. **“The one who by his strength established the mountains...who stills the roaring of the seas...(who stills) the tumult of the peoples...You crown the year with your bounty.”** David goes on and on as He sees all that is good coming from God. And where does this hope begin? **“When iniquities prevail against me, you atone for our transgressions.”** He is our hope, our only hope, because He alone forgives. He is **“God of our salvation.”**

We have hope (certainty in everlasting future of peace and joy) because God is our hope (the source and foundation of all we have in this life and forever).

Prayer – O God of our salvation, when I am tempted to put my hope in anything or anyone in this world, remind me that You are my only hope, and You are more than enough. Amen.

Today's Devotion was written by Pastor Jason

Tuesday October 13, 2020

Read Psalm 66

Praise the LORD!

Praise the LORD! Those words are easy to say - but harder to mean. I look around at my present condition; I find things to complain about - not just the virus, but I don't always get what I want; I suffer from loss of employment, from unfriendly clerks, and general loneliness. Yet it is true. Praise the LORD!

His past works are massive, documented, and visible. Consider the rescue from slavery in Egypt, a slavery of constantly increasing abuse, of attempted genocide. Yet God led the people out of there, a people without a military, families and goods fleeing. The sea dried up before them only to return following them to remove a pursuing army. Indeed, praise the LORD!

I forget about God's physical care for me. How He has provided food, clothing, shelter, etc. freely to me in past years. Summer and winter; spring and fall have cycled through my years, delighting and obstructing but giving me the security of consistency. How He maintains me, even when I fail to recognize His actions.

And I forget how evil has tempted and struggled to make me forget my baptism, to make me forget how Jesus died and rose, to save me from the evil that exists in my own nature. This is far more important than physical rescue or the good things I find in my life. God has made me His own. Now that deserves praise. Praise the LORD!

Prayer: LORD God: I thank You for my salvation. I thank You for continuing to guard and keep me even when I forget to appreciate and thank You for what You have done. Thank you for the uncounted daily gifts in this life you give me. Thank You. Praise the LORD!

Today's Devotion was written by Pastor Arthur Bolstad

Wednesday October 14, 2020

Read Psalm 67

May God's Face Shine on Us

The Psalms as some have noted before, are the songbook of the Old Testament. And this psalm as we read through it is obviously one of the psalms closest to a song. We can see the chorus in verses 3 and 5. And this psalm is a psalm of JOY!! May God be gracious to us and bless us and make his face shine upon us! This is an interesting way to speak, but also the common benediction that we hear on Sunday mornings.

But have you ever actually thought about it more than just a wonderful blessing at the end of a service? What does it mean that God is gracious and blesses us? What does it mean for him to have his face shining upon us?

Well the psalmist prays that God would be gracious and bless them through whatever they are going through. And we do that too! Whether it is something at work or something at school or at home, we always pray that God would be gracious to us.

Now for the stranger one, "**May his (God's) face shine upon us.**" There's a Hebrew idiom for anger, which is saying someone's nose is burning, they are burning with anger. And more than that, if someone is extremely mad, they just won't look at you. They will turn from you or have you leave their presence. Here, it is the opposite of that though. The psalmist, and we in turn, are asking that God would keep His face upon us and bless us. And with that, we rejoice, knowing that God hears our prayers, blesses us, and through Jesus, we have favor in His sight.

So let us do as the psalmist proclaims, Let us be glad and sing for joy, let us praise God, let all the peoples praise God! May we remember that God doesn't hide His face from us, but cares for and blesses us. And that fear that we have of him isn't a terror in the night fear, but a reverential, "**You are the Almighty,**" kind of fear.

Prayer—Gracious Lord, bless us and be gracious to us. Keep us in your favor, and help us to live our lives in your grace, sharing the Gospel message of Jesus our Lord. Amen.

Today's Devotion was written by Seminarian Chris Deneen

Thursday October 15, 2020

Read Psalm 68:1-18

The LORD Ascended On High

The psalmist writes beautifully and frighteningly of God's leading and dwelling with His people from Mount Sinai to Mount Zion to His Holy City and Temple in Jerusalem. The LORD'S glory and enthroned majesty, mercy, justice, and covenant promises are seen and given. Our sin is real and deadly, and this is an eternal problem. The wages of sin is death, separating all mankind from God. **"God shall arise, His enemies shall be scattered . . . as wax melts before fire, so the wicked shall perish before God!"** (v. 1-2).

Thankfully, the LORD makes His dwelling place in His temple with His people, Christ's Body, the Church. God's covenant promise of deliverance is eternally fulfilled in Christ Jesus, the Son of God. And for the sake of Christ, we are declared righteous, **"But the righteous shall be glad; they shall exult before God; they shall be jubilant with joy!"** (v. 3). He, JESUS, **"the LORD is salvation,"** is ascended on high and enthroned as Lord and King over all now and till the Last Day and forever!

Philip Melanchthon writes of our nature and Christ's power, "Human nature is far too weak to resist the devil by its own power. He holds captive everyone who has not been freed through faith. There is a need for Christ's power against the devil. For we know that for Christ's sake we are heard and have the promise . . . Psalm 68:18 teaches this very thing: 'You ascended on high, leading a host of captives in Your train and receiving gifts among men.' Christ has overcome the devil, and has given to us a promise and the Holy Spirit, in order that—by divine aid—we ourselves may also overcome" (Apology of the Augsburg Confession, Article V:17-18).

Prayer - LORD God. You give us gifts by Your Holy Spirit and feed us through Your Word through the care of pastors and teachers who faithfully teach and preach the Scriptures. Prepare our hearts and minds for works of service and growth in unity "of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God" (Eph. 4:13). To maturity in the fullness of Christ. Help us overcome trials and temptations as You dwell in us, and to share Your Gospel Truth to all people scattered abroad the earth. In Jesus Name. Amen

Today's Devotion was written by Pre-seminary student Nathan Tritch

Friday October 16, 2020

Read Psalm 68:19-35

Victory in Jesus

"Blessed be the Lord, who daily bears us up; God is our salvation!" Psalm 68 is a psalm of deliverance and victory. David declares the mighty deeds and power of our God, especially His mighty acts of salvation and deliverance. Now, unlike most of us, David was an ancient Jewish king. His definition of a victory and deliverance is quite a bit different than ours. He rejoices first of all that God gives him military victory and allows the people of Israel to live in relative peace.

When David says that to God belong deliverances from death, he is giving thanks that he was spared from the weapons of his foes. For most of us, spears and arrows aren't always at the front of our minds. But that doesn't render this psalm useless to us. To the contrary, our place in history allows us to know a deeper meaning to David's word. Truly our God is the God that saves us, not only from evil men who can seem so far off but from the sin that clings so tightly to us. In our sin, we come face to face with death but **"our God is a God of salvation."** He has delivered us from death with the forgiveness earned for us by Christ Jesus. Jesus has conquered death, and in Him we are more than conquerors. Since our mighty and powerful God is for us, no evil, even death itself, can stand against us.

Prayer - Lord God of power and might, we praise You that You conquer Your enemies and stamp out evil and unrighteousness. We thank you for giving us a share in the victory over evil, sin, suffering, and death that Jesus Christ has won. Teach us to call upon Your mighty power in all distress and to trust in Your abundant deliverance. Keep us and guard us in true faith that we may stand on the last day when You put a final end to death, the last enemy to be defeated. In the holy and precious name of Jesus. Amen.

Today's Devotion was written by Seminarian Case Farney

Saturday October 17

Read [Psalm 69](#)

“Imprecatory Psalms”

It’s easy to praise God when everything goes perfectly. When you wake up to some of the beautiful weather we’ve had lately; when your team not only wins - they stomp on their arch rival; when your day miraculously goes exactly the way you prayed it would go. Psalm 68 was like that. This isn’t Psalm 68.

In today’s Psalm, David has had many days that have been the exact opposite. Figuratively, he writes, **“I sink in deep mire”**; **“the flood sweeps over me”**. He’s got troubles: **“More in number than the hairs of my head are those who hate me without cause”**. You’ve heard these laments of his before – he complains about all his enemies, his woes, and his despair, but then is reminded of the Lord’s blessings and protection and is comforted.

Not in this Psalm. David complains. David confesses that he, too, is a sinner. He recounts all the suffering he’s received on account of worshipping God; at one point he almost sounds upset that God seemingly hasn’t noticed how he’s lost his family’s love due to his zeal for God. Then, it’s back to sinking in mire, and it just doesn’t get better. It seems like this time nothing he says or does helps.

Have you ever felt like that? When your favorite Bible verse just didn’t make you feel loved by God? Or a favorite Christian song didn’t get you out of your funk? David has reached that point. And that’s where this becomes an “imprecatory” Psalm: he starts praying for bad things to happen to his tormentors. **“Let their eyes be darkened, so that they cannot see”**. Although he just admitted he’s a sinner (like his enemies), he prays for God to **“Add to them punishment upon punishment; may they have no acquittal from you.”**

Not very Christian, right? But very human. That’s the ugly place you arrive at when you put too much trust in your prayer, your worship, or your sacrifices. When you expect God to fix what’s wrong on your timetable and in your way.

David’s joy returns, though, in the final verses as he looks to God’s deeds: **“For God will save Zion and build up the cities of Judah”**. God always saves you. And often that happens in ways far different than your best plans. It always turns out the same – God’s salvation is better than we can imagine. Remember that, and turn to Him.

Prayer - Gracious Father, when I suffer; strengthen me. Turn me from myself and toward Your mighty deeds and remind me of Your love. In Jesus Name, Amen.

Today’s Devotion was written by Pastor Jeff Nelson

Monday October 19

Read Psalm 70

Urgent!

There are few words in the world that will put us on edge quite like “urgent.” This is something that cannot wait. It must be addressed NOW! There is no time to lose. Granted, sometimes we act as though everything is urgent. (We want an answer now. We hate waiting.) This is really just a lack of patience.

But on occasion, life and death DO hang in the balance. Sometimes, the pain IS unbearable. We don’t know what David’s urgent situation was as he wrote Psalm 70, but it certainly sounds urgent. **“Make haste, O God, to deliver me! O Lord, make haste to help me!”** Hurry up, God!

Perhaps you know this prayer. “Hurry up, God! I need Your help. Certainly, You are able. I am eager for the day **when all who seek you rejoice and are glad in you. Those who love your salvation can constantly say, ‘God is great.’** But that’s not where I am today, Lord. **I am poor and needy; come quickly to me, O God. You are my help and my deliverer; O Lord do not delay!”**

And without fail, He answers. Some years ago, a wise pastor told me that God answers every prayer when a Christian asks for healing. And every prayer is answered with a yes. To the most urgent need, the care of our souls, we immediately receive healing, forgiveness and presence of God through Christ. To our need in the moment, Christ promises physical healing as well – sometimes immediately, sometimes eventually, always eternally. To this we can truly say evermore, “God is great!”

Prayer – Lord, in my time of urgent need, help me to cling in faith to You as I wait for healing immediately, eventually, but certainly eternally. Amen.

Today’s Devotion was written by Pastor Jason

Tuesday October 20

Read Psalm 71

He Never Fails

How often I agree with the Psalmist! How often it seems that the world is against me. Not only do people disagree with me, they are angry that I do agree with them! My existence is an affront to their peace! My very trust in God is what they hate; and the reason they attack me.

But I continue to trust in the God Who brought me this far. He is the one I trust and rely upon. He has never let me down. Let them rage, they cannot succeed. Let them plot against me - they really fight against God! And that always fails.

But I ignore their efforts. I put my trust in the One who sacrificed Himself for Me. I know that after doing that He will not abandon me to the wiles of the world; to the anguish of enemy attacks; to a betrayal of my own nature which listens to the world. He is the rock I rest on when it seems that nature is against me, when all else appears to be failing.

Jesus never fails! He gave me faith, He maintains that faith, so I know that I am always protected. The One who died for me, when I was yet attacking Him, will not lose me to such weak and self-promoting attacks. Yes, in Jesus is my strength. "Abide in Me" and I do. Let the rest rise or fall, I have all I need or want!

Prayer: Oh Jesus, the world is so overwhelming. Let me never lose sight of You and Your presence, protecting and supporting me in everything. Thank You for that assurance. Amen.

Today's Devotion was written by Pastor Art Bolstad

Wednesday October 21

Read Psalm 72

The True King

From the inscription at the beginning of the Psalm, we might think that this Psalm is about Solomon, the author. He is, after all, the first king of Israel who is a “**royal son.**” He asked God for wisdom to judge the people in righteousness and was granted that wisdom by God. But the psalm describes the king’s reign enduring “**throughout all generations.**” Solomon was wise enough to know His reign would not go on forever.

Solomon wasn’t the true King of Israel. Sure, he sat on the throne and everyone called him king, but the real King of Israel was God Himself. At his best, Solomon was only a pale imitation of the true King, and still his reputation spread to distant lands. Yet Solomon knew that one day one of his descendants would truly be endowed with God’s justice and righteousness, not because He was Solomon’s son, but because He was God’s Son.

This psalm ultimately points to the coming of Jesus who sits at the right hand of God, the Father Almighty, with “all authority in heaven and on earth.” Christ Jesus rules in righteousness and judges according to His great mercy so that all who believe in Him will live under Him in His kingdom in everlasting blessedness.

As we draw near to selecting new leaders in our nation, we should pray for wisdom. In all times, we should pray for our leaders (whether we vote for them or even agree with them). But our hope is in the Ruler who can fulfill the extraordinary description of Psalm 72. To this King, we pray:

Prayer: Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel, who alone does wondrous things. Blessed be his glorious name forever; may the whole earth be filled with his glory! Amen and Amen.

Today’s Devotion was written by Pastor Jason

Thursday October 22, 2020

Read Psalm 73

Pure Hearts

If you have vision problems, you know it is difficult to see clearly without the help of eyeglasses or possible eye surgery. When ungodliness is praised, and shortcomings grip our hearts and fail us, how do we react? How can we see spiritually through such things as these?

Asaph confesses he is ravingly arrogant and enviously jealous when he sees the *shâlôm* prosperity and riches of the ungodly. Asaph also recognizes the goodness and love of God toward Israel: **“Truly God is good to Israel, to those who are pure in heart. But as for me, my feet had almost stumbled, my steps had nearly slipped. For I was envious of the arrogant when I saw the prosperity [*shâlôm*] of the wicked.”** (v. 1-3)

Our faith waivers in moments of weakness, and we cannot keep our hearts pure and clean from the sickness of sin. How can we see? We need spiritual minds for sight as Jesus clearly shows us we need pure hearts to see: **“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God”** (Matthew 5:8), and **“Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners”** (Mark 2:17). The Holy Spirit works and creates faith in us through the Gospel of Christ. Through God’s Word, our Baptism in Christ, and Holy Supper, God gives us spiritual sight so we can gaze upon and behold the beauty of the Lord GOD in Christ revealed for us.

Although Asaph’s faith crumbles in weakness, just like ours, he is given pureness of heart in God alone. Yahweh is a Mighty Refuge and Rock of Strength for him, which is also ours in Christ alone: **“My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever”** (v. 26).

Prayer - Yahweh God, You alone are a Mighty Rock and Refuge for our impure hearts. You have made us partakers and children of promise because of Christ. Your wisdom and power given for us in Christ’s sufferings and death for our sin overcomes the power of sin, death, and all evil. Preserve us in Your righteousness **“that I may tell of all your works”** (v. 28) until we see You face to face in fullness on the Last Day in the goodness of Christ Jesus. Amen

Today’s Devotion was written by Pre-seminary Student Nathan Tritch

Friday October 23, 2020

Read Psalm 74

Is God Far Off?

"O God, why do you cast us off forever? Why does your anger smoke against the sheep of your pasture?" How often do we wonder of God why He allows such awful things to happen to His people? Why does it seem like God has left us to our own devices, to fend for ourselves? After all, we are His congregation, which He "**purchased of old**" and redeemed to be the tribe of His heritage. Has God forgotten His people? Surely not. Then why does God often seem so far off? There are hints of an answer throughout this psalm: God has purchased and redeemed us and dwelt with us (vs 2), He has worked salvation in the earth from of old by creating and sustaining His creation (vs. 12), He has made covenant with His people (vs. 20).

In so many ways, God has not abandoned us but quite the opposite. He has provided salvation to His people in so many ways that we lose sight of them. It is not that God is far off but so close to us that we cannot properly focus on Him. Still, we can and do join in the words of this psalm to call upon the Lord when we are troubled. We do not call upon God because his help is far away but because it is close enough to hear and touch and taste. In the words and sacraments that God has given to us, we perceive clearly the work that He has done for us.

Prayer: O Lord, we thank you that You hear us when we call upon Your Name. Pour out your salvation upon Your people and teach us to know the things You have continually done to uphold us from the beginning of creation that we might have patience to endure all things in You. Reveal Your work in our lives that we would every day see more clearly Jesus Christ, our Savior. See our hardships and remember Your people. Through Jesus Christ, our Lord, Amen.

Today's Devotion was written by Seminarian Case Farney

Saturday October 24

Read [Psalm 75](#)

“A Trusty Master”

The first time I got into a small airplane with the intent of learning how to fly, things might have gone quite differently. If the instructor had simply helped me start the engine, then got out and waved his hand, telling me to, “take off and head over there. Bring it back in an hour,” I might have never even started the first lesson. But no – for something like this you find someone with the right background, experience, and temperament to completely fill you with confidence. You want to know that you’ll come back safely, even though you’re just a novice. You want to be able to try new things, knowing that a master pilot is there at hand to save you when needed.

Our Psalm for today tells about Someone like this. Someone Who has everything under control; Who makes the difficult look easy. He writes, “**When the earth totters, and all its inhabitants, it is I who keep steady its pillars.**” You and I can navigate safely through our sometimes scary world, knowing God protects us.

When “the boastful” toot their own horns (the Psalmist obviously knew about our election system), God tells them when to “put a cork in it”. When you and I consider how to “help” God judge those wicked ones around us, we’re reminded that that’s not our job: “**it is God who executes judgment, putting down one and lifting up another.**”

We know this is the case when we remember His mighty deeds throughout the ages. His wondrous promises, His amazing fulfillment. We know He’s here with us, having placed His Name on us at baptism, placing His salvation into us at the Lord’s Supper, and having given us His Son, Immanuel – God With Us.

Prayer - **We give thanks to you, O God; we give thanks, for Your Name is near. We recount your wondrous deeds.** In Jesus Name, Amen.

Today’s Devotion was written by Pastor Jeff Nelson

Monday October 26, 2020

Read Psalm 76

Who Can Stand?

The word that comes to mind with this Psalm is intimidating. **“Who can stand before you once your anger is roused?”** The assumed answer is pretty clear: NO ONE.

After all, who is unable to stand before the righteous judgment of God? The warrior who had arrows, shield, and sword all broken by God. Who can't stand? The stouthearted who is able to face any obstacle has his spoil stripped before fading into the sleep of death. Who can't stand? The men of war whose hands were of no use before the Creator of the universe. Who can't stand? The chariot (the greatest military weapon of the time) as rider and horse lay stunned.

All of this should be intimidating to anyone. The psalm has just slashed down to the ground all of the strongest, toughest characters of the ancient world. These towers of strength have been melted down to sad little puddle. Today, this would be the baddest member of Seal Team 6 being turned into a whimpering three-year-old lying in the fetal position. Such is the holy and righteous fear that falls on one who foolishly believes he or she could stand before the glorious, majestic Lord.

If this is the state of those who are the strongest, what hope is there to stand before God? It makes me think of the exchange between Jesus and the disciples. The disciples were amazed that a rich young ruler would have a harder time entering the kingdom of God than to go through the eye of a needle. They ask the master, **“Who then can be saved?”** Jesus replied, **“For men it is impossible, but all things are possible with God.”** Even better, with Christ. We humbly bow before the glorious, majestic Lord of creation knowing we can not stand before Him. Yet we bow, taking the posture of a servant, the posture of Christ. We trust in Him knowing our everlasting enemies have been defeated in Him who **“saves all the humble of the earth.”**

Prayer – Dear Lord Jesus, grant to me humble faith to trust in you. For me salvation is impossible, but with You all things are possible. Amen.

Today's Devotion was written by Pastor Jason

Tuesday October 27, 2020
Read Psalm 77

He Listens *and* Acts

“I cried to God with my voice!” But how easy it is to forget that God wants to hear from us; how easy it is to be so wrapped up in our problems that we can’t see beyond the end of our nose. When Jesus gave us the Lord’s Prayer, He started us with “Our Father”. Father’s want to hear from their children. He wants them to pay attention to Him.

There are no topics forbidden to our conversation with God. There is sharing our life, thanksgiving for joys of success, or special blessings, of simply enjoying life. There is sharing our sorrows, our fears, and our troubles. Perhaps, the most important, and hardest to share, are our feelings of guilt, of incompetence, and of failures. That which we are most ashamed of, we hide. Remember Adam and Eve in the garden, how they immediately hid from God, ashamed of their disobedience.

But God doesn’t just listen, He acts. Guilt is nailed to the cross where He paid for the sins of all, but especially for me! I am no longer guilty, I do not face punishment, exile, or other discipline (such as death) for what I have been and/or done. God forgives and He intervenes in our life to enable us to live in Him, a sharing, unselfish, good life.

The world, with its pressures on us has been defeated. Sometimes we are living in that knowledge; other times, we see God actively intervening in events - consider God’s people trapped in Egypt, how God led them out using plagues, using the wind to clear the red seas for His people to cross - a trap for pursuers.

Talk with God, knowing that He cares and acts - for your benefit.

Prayer: Thank you, my God, for intervening in the World. Thank you for caring and listening to me. Thank you for your salvation and continued presence in my life. Thank you. Amen

Today’s Devotion was written by Pastor Art Bolstad

Wednesday October 28, 2020

Psalm 78:1-31

Who We Want to Be

Do you ever try to place yourself in the psalm? Sometimes it is easier than others, but today's hits a little harder if you put yourself into it. Especially looking at verses 7-8. God has set His people, and they've been given the law of God. This is so that the next generation and then the next generation, and then the next generation may know God. But then in verse 8, there is this turn. Why should they hope in God and not forget his works? So that they aren't like their fathers, who were rebellious and stubborn. When we look at psalms like this, or readings that have a similar feel to it, and we try to put ourselves in it, we have to wonder, what generation are we? We know which generation we don't want to be, that's for sure! So we do what the psalmist writes, that we fear, love, and trust in God.

And why? Well take another look at verses 9-16. Look at all the Mighty wonders that are recounted of God. He performed wonders, divided the sea, led the people by night and by day, gave them water, what wondrous acts. Yet verse 17, they did not believe. They asked questions like those in verses 19 & 20.

Again, in verses 22-29, there is more of God taking care of His people, and how abundantly he did so. But then in verses 30-31, we read that the anger of God rose against them, that he killed the strongest of them and laid low the young men. What a turn of events. And now I'm sure you don't want to put yourself in the psalm at all! But you and I can know that we trust in God. That we try not to follow false gods or temptations. We strive to live as His people and live our lives for Him the best we can. So today, count the blessings God has given you. Something we often forget to do, especially in these trying times. And remember, that God cares and provides for you, because you are His people, YOU are His child.

Prayer-Heavenly Father, I so often fall astray. I do the things I want, and the things that may be against Your will. Help me to push those temptations to the side, avoid them, and live as Your child in all things. Thank you for all of the blessings in my life, and continue to hold me in Your hand. Amen.

Today's Devotion was written by Seminarian Chris Deneen

Thursday October 29, 2020

Read Psalm 78:32-72

What God Does For Us

God's grace and marvelous acts show His love, patience, and mercy toward His people. God remembers His covenant promise for us. Israel's rebellion and faithlessness displayed their need for God's deliverance and forgiveness. Asaph wrote, "**Their heart was not steadfast toward Him; they were not faithful to His covenant**" (v. 37).

We can see God's anger toward Israel's sin and God's love and mercy: "**Yet He, being compassionate, atoned for their iniquity and did not destroy them. He restrained his anger often and did not stir up all His wrath. He remembered that they were but flesh, a wind that passes and comes not again**" (v. 38-39). Today, our sinful flesh battles the Spirit living in us. Through the cross of Christ, God delivers us from this sin and strengthens us by grace.

Martin Luther cautioned those growing cold, eventually not desiring and despising the Lord's Supper:

*"I have found in my own experience, and as everyone will find in his own case: if a person withdraws like this from the Sacrament, he will daily become more and more callous and cold, and will at last disregard the Sacrament completely. To avoid this, we must examine our hearts and conscience (1 Corinthians 11:28; 2 Corinthians 13:5), and we must act like people who desire to be right with God (**Psalm 78:37**). The more this is done, the more the heart will be warmed and enkindled"* (Large Catechism, V:51-54).

Israel's faithlessness and sins are seen throughout generations, from slavery in Egypt to captivity in Babylon and beyond. By God's Word and power, they repented and trusted in the LORD'S covenant promises. The LORD God had delivered Israel from the house of slavery, and led them through the Red Sea on dry land like a Shepherd, "**He led out his people like sheep and guided them in the wilderness like a flock. He led them in safety, so that they were not afraid, but the sea overwhelmed their enemies. And He brought them to His holy land, to the mountain which his right hand had won**" (vs. 52-54). God delivers us from sin and evil for the sake of our Good Shepherd, Jesus Christ, given for us.

Prayer - O, LORD. Through Christ crucified and risen, our sins are atoned for. By what you have done for us and continue to do through the Body and Blood of Jesus. May we see the grace You have given us in community together in Christ, and grant us community for which we long for. Thank You for Resurrection hope we have now and forever through faith in Jesus Christ and in the age to come. Amen.

Today's Devotion was written by Pre-Seminary Student Nathan Tritch

Friday October 30, 2020
Read Psalm 79

True Mercy

There are two meanings of mercy that are discussed throughout Psalm 79. The first is the ongoing cry for mercy from the gruesome realities of God's wrath at the hands of the nations around Israel. The lives of the Israelites were being ravaged, their cities laid waste, and their reputation was slandered. Psalm 79 acknowledges that God is allowing these grave evils to befall His people because of their sins and idolatry.

The mercy from physical harm is attached to a deeper form of mercy: the forgiveness of sins. The refrain of verse 8 is a constant topic in all of Scripture and in the whole of our life as Christians. It says "**Do not remember against us our former iniquities; let your compassion come speedily to meet us, for we are brought very low.**" Our God is not sadistic. He does not rejoice to see us suffer for our sins. Nevertheless, he works even through the sufferings we endure to show us mercy. We are "brought very low" by the cares and worries of the world and even more so by the internal guilt we bear because we know the weight of our sins. But as Paul says, "**for those who love God, all things work together for good**".

When we are heavy-laden with the burdens of our everyday life, we are reminded of the mercy offered by God. He reminds us that he not only gives us our daily bread and provides for our temporal needs, but He also gives to us the Living Bread, Jesus Christ, Who is our ample provision for our spiritual needs. God gives worldly mercy to His people, but even more so He gives true mercy that leads to everlasting life.

Prayer:

Heavenly Father, we thank You that You are merciful to us. You provide for us in the midst of trouble, and daily give us all that we need both in body and in soul. Remind us in every trial to remember You, our Deliverer, and to call upon Your name for mercy which You give so abundantly. Teach us also to show Your mercy to those around us that we might fulfill Your holy will. We pray all these things through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Today's Devotion was written by Seminarian Case Farney

Saturday October 31

Read [Psalm 80](#)

“Turn Us Again, Lord”

“Restore us, O Lord God of hosts! Let your face shine, that we may be saved!”

Again and again in this psalm, these words sound from the voice of God’s People. First of all, from refugees of the Northern Kingdom that are fleeing death and destruction at the hands of the invading Assyrians. They cry out to the **“Shepherd of Israel... enthroned upon the cherubim”**, “give ear to our prayer!” Their plight calls them back to the only One who can truly help them.

God’s People recall and take to heart that it was He that freed them from bondage in Egypt. He brought them out, drove out the nations that were in His promised land and He planted them there. It was He that cleared the ground, causing them to take deep root and fill that land. His kingdom spread to cover the mountains and stretch from the Mediterranean to the Euphrates.

But now, it lies in desolation. Its walls are broken down; anyone enters in and takes what they want. Even the wild boar (Assyria) ravages it, feeding on its former wealth. So what do God’s People say? **“Turn again, O God of hosts! Look down from heaven, and see”**. Where else could they turn, but to the Lord?

Individually, each of us is growing older. We’re experiencing life’s burdens dragging us down. Whether it’s cancer, “old age”, COVID worries, economics, or politics – the doings of mankind (and our sin) are behind all our troubles. While God uses people to help us (doctors, employers, even politicians!), it is only God that can help us.

This isn’t a psalm of despair. Yes, God’s People are despairing of their world around them and all they’ve accomplished on their own, but at the same time they’re filled with Hope. And, without even knowing what they were saying (I believe), they put their finger right on the reason for Hope. Thinking of themselves (I’m sure), they pray that the Seed that God planted in the Promised Land would take root. And, while that Offspring might be cut down, perish, and be forsaken by His Lord, they pray that God’s **“hand be on the Man of Your right hand”**, **“the Son of Man You have made strong for Yourself.”** Come, Lord Jesus!

Prayer - **Restore us, O Lord God of hosts! Let your face shine, that we may be saved!** In Jesus Name, Amen.

Today’s Devotion was written by Pastor Jeff Nelson

Monday November 2, 2020
Read Psalm 81

Trouble Listening

There's something about Psalm 81 that seems very familiar. It's hard to listen. We struggle to focus and pay attention. So did the people of Israel. Three different times in the Psalm, in one way or another the people of Israel are told by God to "**listen to Me.**" It reminds me of the encouragement from Hebrews 2:1 that "*we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it.*" Yet our attention drifts. Easily. Often. Quickly.

Supposedly the average attention span today is down to 8 seconds, which is down from 12 seconds about 15 years ago. It's hard to pay attention. In fact, by now you want to zone out. FOCUS!!

If we struggle with focus in everything, certainly we will struggle to focus on Christ and His Word. Attention is drawn every other direction. We listen to other voices that quickly become our gods (that is our sources of meaning). Other voices captivate our attention. It is so easy to lose focus on the most important thing - God's gift of salvation in Christ.

Yet even as we lose focus, Christ remains laser focused on what we truly need. He was constantly focused on the prize of the cross - your eternal life with Him. The writer to the Hebrews tells us in Hebrews 12:1-2 that remembering the focus of Jesus, helps us to follow Him.

"Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God."

It is no simple thing to be focused, to run with endurance the race of faith. You will be distracted, but then come back and remember that nothing has distracted your Lord from caring for you, giving all for you. Let that be your encouragement in this short-attention span world.

Prayer – Dear Lord, help me to set distractions aside and hear Your Word and listen attentively to it. Amen.

Today's Devotion was written by Pastor Jason

Tuesday November 3, 2020

Read Psalm 82

God's Justice

Our God is a just God. He cares about justice. When He observes our earthly judges, people whom He has entrusted with using His wisdom to suppress evil doers and their actions, people who mis-judge, who pervert their decisions to favor friends or personal benefits, then He is stirred to action. He brings His justice to such unjust behavior.

The poor, the resourceless person, have a defender in God. They have the right and ability to call to Him for justice. He promises mercy to them and justice to those who misuse what God give to them, eventual justice in this world and in the next. But to those who come to Him, who judge for righteousness, who rely on Him and not on their own efforts, to them, God gives mercy, mercy that forgives them before His judgment. Mercy and a turning around of life for good.

It is true that people are in rebellion against God, and so people with power, with responsibility to judge conflicts, some of those people will misuse their position and power. Those who have a responsibility to judge the judges are told by God to do justice there, justice that will enable the poor to be supported. And God's people all can ask God to intervene, to bring that justice for the poor.

But it is not just others that we can talk to God about. Do we act ourselves in justice? Our calling from God is not to decide on the righteousness of others. No, we are called to judge ourselves. Do we share? Do we assist those needing help? Do we have an attitude like Jesus, to care more for others than for ourselves?

Yes, God will punish the wicked; He will bring their lives down to ruin - in His good time. God will! Not us. We have enough with our own sins, our own lacks. His mercy showers good upon us - forgiveness, love, protection, and more.

Prayer: Father in Heaven: Remind us of Your constant care, Give us that confidence that lets us turn the evil we see to your justice. Thank you for Your continual presence, punishing the wicked in their acts, but bringing mercy to us as we trust You. Amen.

Today's Devotion was written by Pastor Art Bolstad

Wednesday November 4, 2020

Read Psalm 83

Rest While We Wait

Well, as we await election results, we turn to the one true, eternal, and right thing in this world, our God, and the Holy Scriptures. Our psalm for today, psalm 83, you may read through and wonder, “What is going on??” Psalm 83 is a special type of psalm, it is imprecatory in nature. A psalm pleading to God to destroy the enemy of Israel, pleading with God not to be silent, but to make His voice be heard!

I pray on this Wednesday morning, November 4th that you find a time to rest in this psalm. Although it may not seem like a very peaceful or restful psalm, rest in God’s word. Rest in the fact that no matter what happens, no matter what takes place today or in the next several days, God is not silent. He is here in our midst. Many may look at the world and start to pray psalms like this. Maybe you’ve even felt like praying a psalm like this at times, “Lord, don’t be silent, be here in our midst, there are people against us, and we don’t know what to do. Please do something Lord. Something, Anything.”

We know that at the end of the day, at the end of time, God will have His judgement. He will take care of His enemies the way that He wills. All throughout this verse we read about how the psalmist asks God to destroy His enemies, and then we come back to the final two verses. The psalmist prays that they be but to shame, that they be dismayed forever, and why? Not for his own personal gain, not for his glory, but so that God may be known as Lord and the Most High over all. And that is what we pray for. We pray and live knowing that God is indeed the Most High, and He is our Lord. Ruler of all. ALL. Everything. So find your rest and hope in Him today and every day.

Prayer—Heavenly Father, Lord of Lords, King of Kings, remind us that no matter what is happening or going on in this world, that you are Ruler. That YOU hold us in your hands, and that YOU will care for us. Help us to live each day knowing YOU are in charge. Amen.

Today’s Devotion was written by Seminarian Chris Deneen

Thursday November 5, 2020

Read Psalm 84

The Courts of the LORD

In some places, upon entrance to a building, we are greeted with a valet or concierge at your service. Entering a church building with the communion of saints for Divine Service, we are greeted at the door along with those waiting for us. Together we dwell in Christ; Our hearts and flesh desire to be with the family of God in His courts, and to sing for joy to the crucified and risen Lord and Savior Jesus, our God and King. As God's people, we dwell together for the sake of Christ's body and blood given and shed for us on a tree for the forgiveness of sins.

The psalmist desires the LORD'S dwelling place at the temple with his entire being, **"My soul longs, yes, faints for the courts of the LORD; my heart and flesh sing for joy to the living God"** (v. 2). The Levitical priests were called to service and duties surrounding the temple of the LORD. Some as the keepers of the door. The psalmist desired to be a doorkeeper amongst the godlessness that surrounded him. He writes, **"For a day in Your courts is better than a thousand elsewhere. I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of wickedness. For the LORD is a sun and a shield"** (v. 10, 11). Today, Jesus is our armor of light and life in this dark world. Our hearts long for the courts of the LORD amongst wickedness and sadness that surrounds us. Yet, we have been given His joy and presence as we gather together in Christ's precious Name, and to serve one another here and now in Christ's righteousness.

John writes of the Holy City of God in the new heaven and new earth to come: **"And its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb. And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb . . . and its gates will never be shut by day—and there will be no night there"** (Revelation 21:22-23, 25). Until then, here and now, we have hope, light, joy, forgiveness, and peace with God for the sake of Christ to wait in love and serve one another in the house of God in the world.

Prayer - LORD, **"For a day in Your courts is better than a thousand elsewhere."** Calm our fears and anxieties that burden our hearts today. Thank You for Your grace and everlasting righteousness we have now and forever in Christ Jesus. Amen.

Today's Devotion was written by Pre-seminary Student Nathan Tritch

Friday November 6, 2020

Read Psalm 85

Remembering the Faithfulness of our God

I have to admit, this Psalm is a bit overwhelming. It's hard to pick out a particular verse or phrase to focus on because everywhere you look, the psalmist is heaping up praise and remembrance of God's great mercy. It seems to me that this is no accident.

In the first place, the psalm is certainly asking God to remember His overwhelming, steadfast love that He has shown to His people, asking Him to once again bring us His generous gifts and once again forgive our sins. At the same time, when we read this psalm we too are called to remember what God has done for us. The psalmist himself wants to hear all of this again. **"Let me hear what God the LORD will speak, for he will speak peace to his people, to his saints; but let them not turn back to folly."**

No matter how often we hear the promises of our ever-faithful God, we long to hear them again. To set aside the words of life that God has given us would be to **"turn back to folly."** As we meditate on the God's word, we should be reminded of Jesus Christ, the Word Incarnate. In Him, **"steadfast love and faithfulness meet; righteousness and peace kiss each other."** Jesus Christ is living proof that God does not forget his people, but shows us steadfast love and grants us salvation.

Prayer - Heavenly Father, Who in ancient days delivered Your people from all their sins and trespasses, remember Your steadfast love and deliver us also today. We long to hear Your Word, to hear of the peace that You grant Your saints. Give us peace and teach us to remember Your salvation accomplished in Your Son, Jesus Christ, the full embodiment of faithfulness and the Prince of Peace. It is in His holy name we pray, Amen.

Today's Devotion was written by Seminarian Case Farney

Saturday November 7

Read [Psalm 86](#)

“Prayer”

This is a Psalm in which David puts the Christian life into words. He describes a beautiful dance between himself, his troubles, his enemies, and his fears – and with God, his Lord, who leads him through this dance of life. A multitude of short prayers begins each move:

“Incline your ear, O LORD”

“Preserve my life”

“Be gracious to me”

“Gladden the soul of your servant”

And, at every prayer, God answers:

“You, O LORD, are good and forgiving”

“You answer me”

“You are great and do wondrous things”

“Great is your steadfast love toward me”

“You have delivered my soul from the depths of Sheol”

This is the Christian life – a continuous, back and forth dialogue between God’s servant: David, you, or me; and our Lord God. He walks with us through life, He lifts us when we fall, He sings with us when we rejoice. And, like David, you and I talk with God. This is life; this is prayer – our “dance” with God.

This prayer is the highest form of worship – to speak with God as His children. We praise Him, beseech Him, implore of Him, and turn to Him. For those of us without the ability to dance, His Spirit lifts our feet and moves us in ways of grace.

David’s poetic description of his life with God can teach us to dance like he did: following our Lord’s lead, looking to Him for direction, and receiving His inspiration and gifts to perform before others.

Prayer - Heavenly Father, fill us with Your Spirit to dance the Christian life as did your servant, David. For Jesus sake, Amen.

Today’s Devotion was written by Pastor Jeff Nelson

Monday November 9, 2020

Read Psalm 87

The Adoption Song

There is a song for almost everything. If you look online, you can find “The Happy Song” and “The Sad Song.” You can easily find “The Happy Birthday Song.” And, if you wish to torture yourself, you can find “The Gummy Bear Song.” (Save yourself the pain and don’t look it up.) The more you look, you can find a song for everything.

The song of Psalm 87 could easily be called “The Adoption Song.” Now maybe you didn’t catch it because the word “adoption” never appears in Psalm 87, but the idea is all over the place. The adoption story really begins in verse 4 after three verses of praise. There are people who know the Lord from “**Rahab and Babylon; behold Philistia and Tyre, with Cush.**” Peoples of various ethnic backgrounds, languages and nations, but they are all made part of God’s family. How? “**The Lord records as he registers the peoples, ‘This one was born there (Zion).’**”

The Lord changes the birth certificates of people from far and wide to make them part of His people Israel. As the Lord claims people as His own, they share in all of the promises of Israel. That’s why every promise of God through all the Scriptures belongs to you. Through Christ, your birth certificate has been changed too. Oh, you may have one in the closet that says you were born in St. Louis, St. Paul or Spain. But your adoption papers have changed your true citizenship. You belong to the family of God through baptism into the death and resurrection of Jesus. As surely as Christ is God’s Son, you share in His family completely. You are part of the New Zion, the New Jerusalem. By faith, “**you were born there**” as you have been born again in Jesus. And now, as Paul says in Philippians 3, “**our citizenship is in heaven.**” Could there be any better reason to sing?

Prayer – Dear Father in heaven, I rejoice that you have adopted me as Your child through Jesus. Amen.

Today’s Devotion was written by Pastor Jason

Tuesday November 10,2020
Read Psalm 88

Even Now, He Cares

Times come when everything seems to go wrong, to fall apart. My dreams are not only not fulfilled, they seem now to have been mistaken in the first place. My efforts are not appreciated by others. Truly I feel alone in the world.

And then my self-considerations lead me to question, to question even my God. How could He, I think, how could He care about such a miserable failure as me. Me, who I can see, has sinned, has offended God greatly. I am so consumed with my self-loathing that I can't see Him or His grace at all.

This is a time for prayer, a time to talk to God and cry on His Shoulder, so to speak. He tells me He wants to hear from me, so I give Him just what He asked for - my deep despair, my sad story of how I not only have sinned, but how much I am sure that He could not want me or care for me now.

But God does care for me! He cared so much that He went through what makes my sorrows seem easy. Life, emptied from realized Godness, suffering from betrayal, abandonment, torture, and death itself. All to conquer, to destroy the power of death, to destroy even the power of our self-knowledge of despair. He loves us, in spite of the true depth of our unworthiness. All this for us.

It is in these times of loss of everything that we truly come to see and understand that God is our support. Our efforts are good, but it is our trust in God that accomplishes it all. He is there always, the more you see your need, the more you can lean on Him - and the more you will see Him save you!

Prayer: Our Lord, I know my failures and my sins. I know that I deserve nothing. But I know also that you are saving me, bringing me through it all behind the scenes, where I can observe nothing. Thank you, O Lord. Jesus, I continue to rest in You. Amen.

Today's Devotion was written by Pastor Art Bolstad

Wednesday November 11, 2020

Read Psalm 89:1-18

True Power

What do you think of when you think of power? Majesty? Maybe you think of kings of old in Medieval Times. Someone with a big army, someone with a lot of land that they control. Even if you could think of the most powerful person in the world right now, they would fall in comparison with God.

Usually when we think of people with great power, there isn't much compassion that goes along with it. They usually gain their power by this way or that way, usually through force or by a military defeat. But looking at what the Psalmist writes here, it is quite obvious, that while yes God is powerful, there is a different reason for why he proclaims the wonder of the Lord.

In verse 1, "I will sing of the steadfast love of the Lord, forever." This isn't something new or rare to us. The Hebrew word here pops up quite a bit, and it can be translated several ways. The one I'd like to look at today is "**covenant faithfulness**." Which sounds odd doesn't it? But it is what makes God, well, God. If we look at verse 3, we see that God made a covenant with David, to establish his offspring forever and to build his throne for all generations.

This steadfast love, this covenant faithfulness means that God will do what He says He will do. He won't waver, he will indeed do what He says.

As we walk through the rest of the first 18 verses of psalm 89, it is obvious that God is powerful beyond compare. The psalmist speaks of all the greatness of God. Who in the skies can be compared to him? Who is mighty like you O Lord? You rule the sea. The heavens and the earth are yours.

Remember all of the promises that God has put before us. That we, who are indeed His people can look forward to. Although we may forget his promises at times, **God never does**. He will hold to His covenant faithfulness, to keep His word. Which we see in Jesus, the ultimate fulfillment of His promises.

Prayer—Heavenly Father, Gracious Lord, Almighty God. You are faithful to your covenants, and for that we thank and praise you. Although we at times waver and fall, you are there to pick us up. Grant us your strength all of our days. Thank you, for being You, for being faithful to your covenants. Thank You, for sending Your son for our sins. Amen.

Today's Devotion was written by Seminarian Chris Deneen

Thursday November 12, 2020

Read Psalm 89:19-52

Messianic Fulfillment

Who could plan and contain such beautiful, intricate and wonderful, infinite and eternal words of truth and promise which completes, interprets, and in perfection, fulfills all promises entirely in and of itself: and always, pointing us to our Lord and Savior Messiah Jesus; who, infinitely suffered, bled, and paid for all of our sins, and the sins of mankind, and rose from the dead on the third day!? No human mind, strength or will could accomplish this perfection.

This excellency and holiness are only revealed by the will and grace of the "LORD GOD ALMIGHTY" (see Revelation 4:8; 11:17). Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; the Name in which we are forever created anew in Baptism on account of Christ crucified and risen for us! **"Blessed be the LORD forever! Amen and Amen"** (v. 52).

God's firm and secure loving-kindness and promises of old are wonderfully seen all over this psalm. He declares, **"My faithfulness and My steadfast love shall be with him, and in My name shall his horn be exalted"** (v. 24). God's promises, His steadfast love are painted across all of Scripture.

So the Psalmist declares, **"Of old You spoke in a vision to Your godly one, and said: 'I have granted help to one who is mighty; I have exalted one chosen from the people. I have found David, My servant; with My holy oil I have anointed him . . . I will establish his offspring forever and his throne as the days of the heavens.'" (vv. 19-20, 29; see I Sam. 13:14;16:11-13; II Sam. 7:12-29).**

Fittingly, Luke the physician writes of Paul preaching at the synagogue in Antioch in Pisidia: **"And when He [God] had removed him [King Saul], He raised up David to be their king, of whom He testified and said, 'I have found in David the son of Jesse a man after My heart, who will do all My will.' Of this man's offspring God has brought to Israel a Savior, Jesus, as He promised . . . And we bring you the good news that what God promised to the fathers, this He has fulfilled to us their children by raising Jesus"** (Acts 13:22-23, 32, 33).

Prayer - Abba! Father! Blessed LORD and Mighty God. We give thanks: for promise and forgiveness of sins fulfilled in only Messiah Jesus, in and through and with and in His Name we pray; **"You are my Father, and my God, and the Rock of my salvation"** (v. 26). Forever and ever. Amen and Amen.

Today's Devotion was written by Pre-seminary Student Nathan Tritch

Friday November 13, 2020
Read Psalm 90

A Heart of Wisdom

This psalm of Moses is one of my favorite psalms for its stark contrast between God and man and that beautiful verse, "**teach us to number our days that we might get a heart of wisdom.**" Moses praises God as the everlasting Creator. He has been God before even the mountains and the whole world, indeed He is the Creator of even the most seemingly permanent fixtures of our world.

In comparison to God, our whole lives are but the blink of an eye or a dream. In comparison to the God that is the Creator and Sustainer of all reality, we are like an illusion. We live for seventy years or eighty if we are particularly vigorous. In the eyes of God, there is no reason for our lives to be significant at all. Even if we live influential lives and make a great difference in the world, our lives are like a sigh. What a humbling thought! When we are so often tempted to put ourselves in the place of God and think that our thoughts and judgments are worth more than His, He reminds us that when we compare ourselves to Him we find that we are nothing.

At the end of the psalm, Moses turns to ask a blessing on us in light of this understanding. He asks God to bless the work of our hands. For "**unless the LORD builds a house, those who build it labor in vain.**" This passage from Psalm 127 sheds light on Psalm 90. We ask God to teach us to know the insignificance of our lives so we have the wisdom to know that all of our lives and works are meaningless without God but of ultimate significance when they are focused on God. True wisdom is to know that God is God and we are not.

Prayer: Everlasting God, teach us to number our days that we may gain a heart of wisdom. Humble us to know that we are temporary so that we might better know Your everlasting mercy. Bless the work of our hands, for without Your help we can do nothing. Show us Your Son who became subject to death so that we may at last join Him in everlasting life. We ask all these things through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Today's Devotion was written by Seminarian Case Farney

Saturday November 14

Read [Psalm 91](#)

Hear it sung: [On Eagle's Wings](#)

“My Refuge and My Fortress”

The Psalmist has a lot of bad days. He’s surrounded by people wanting to kill him all too frequently. His bones creak, and he cries out to the Lord all day, most days of the week. He’s a lot like us, in our own ways. But occasionally, he takes a step back and sees his life from the outside. Kind of an out-of-body experience, he observes all the evil surrounding him in his life, but is relieved by the overwhelming protection of God over every bad thing. This psalm is like that.

He’s speaking to those who **“dwell in the shelter of the Most High”**. Believers. You know, those who say to the LORD, **“My refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust.”** And what he describes is absolutely unbelievable: nothing can touch these people! Not fowler (bird catcher), pestilence, terror of night, not even arrows. Thousands may fall at the side of a believer – even 10,000! But that believer walks away, unscathed.

But, “wait”, you say, “that’s not how it works.” You and I know that bad things happen to good people. And for Jesus’ disciples – even worse happens (it seems). Yes, I think the Psalmist knew that. Remember all the other psalms? What he was saying was that when these things happen, God is there.

In His own words, God says:

**“Because he (the believer) holds fast to Me in love, I will deliver him;
I will protect him, because he knows My Name.
When he calls to Me, I will answer him;
I will be with him in trouble;
I will rescue him and honor him.
With long life I will satisfy him
and show him My salvation.”**

Most High God, Almighty Lord, thank you for being my refuge, my fortress. When the world overwhelms me, hide me in Your shadow. In Jesus Name, Amen.

Today’s Devotion was written by Pastor Jeff Nelson

Monday November 16, 2020

Read Psalm 92

Rest

Do you need some rest? Without question the answer is yes. Now you may want some rest because you are weary from the heightened stress of the time we are living in. You may want some rest because you are working hard and there is no opportunity for a vacation on the horizon. You may want some rest because the weight of many years is heavy on your shoulders. You may want some rest because you just can't seem to get the sleep you would like.

You might want rest for all these reasons. You need rest because you've been created to need rest. That rest your God knows that you need includes a break, but it's more than just getting a respite from work or some time away. Psalm 92 is subtitled, "**a song for the sabbath.**" It is the only Psalm with that designation. Sabbath means rest. This Psalm shows us the shape of the rest that we need.

What does this rest look like? "**Give thanks to the Lord...sing praises to your name.**" When? We "**declare your steadfast love in the morning and your faithfulness at night.**" That pretty much covers the whole day. Why? "**For you, O Lord, have made me glad by your work; at the works of your hands I sing for joy. How great are your works, O Lord.**"

We tend to think of rest as needing to take it easy because we've been working so hard. This Psalm reminds us that the Lord wants us to stop our work, to take Sabbath rest and consider how hard He has been working in all things for us. We always need such rest, but especially now. As the weight of our work and worry burdens us, we are invited to true rest in Christ. He has provided all that we have. He has carried every burden of our sin and sorrow. With eyes focused on His works, we have relief from feeling the need to carry the weight of the world. He already has and He always does for us.

Prayer – Lord Jesus, let me find true Sabbath rest in You. Amen.

Today's Devotion was written by Pastor Jason Wagner

Tuesday November 17, 2020

Read Psalm 93

God's Moving Flood of Mercy

God sustains, guards, and guides the universe! There is nothing hid from Him - He rules everything, unlike the fake gods - those imaginary beings whom are said to be around but have no control, no reality.

Whenever anyone starts to admire those imaginary beings, then when God actually is visible in His acts, when the world shakes and waters flow - then reality strikes us as well. Our God acts, our God moves the world. Unlike those imaginary beings, the Real God moves the world.

The earth appears to solid - until we see waters flowing rapidly. Water carries away the dirt, flooding fields, breaking down dams. All who go to the seashore can sense this restless water, gnawing away at the land. There move God, there God demonstrates His superiority, there God reminds us that He has always been in charge, that He is superior to all.

So, what about His Words, His witnesses in the language of men? Because they are God's, they continue to show forth His truth. Here too, we see the power and nature of God, His being the superior one. That Word of God, the Bible, changes our hearts, directs our attention away from ourselves to Him.

There too we see our eternal salvation in the One who was, and is, and will sacrifice for all, more particularly for me. The One who rules over all, is the same one who defeated death itself, dying and rising from death for me, and all. The floods are an earthly reminder of the truth, that God has washed away my sins, making righteous before Him. Praise the Lord!

Prayer: I thank you Lord for reminding me in the events of this life, that You are one who governs all. Thank you for the gift of your paying for my sins, for building faith to guide me to trusting You for all. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Today's Devotion was written by Pastor Art Bolstad

Wednesday November 18, 2020

Read Psalm 94

God's Judgments

“How long, Lord, will the wicked, how long will the wicked be jubilant?” Have you ever wondered and asked that question? Maybe too often in your life you see those who are ‘wicked’ prospering. Getting what they want, having whatever they want because they do whatever they have to, not worrying about others. Verses 4-7, you read what they do. They pour out arrogant words. They boast. They crush the Lord’s people. They slay others, and they believe that God won’t notice.

Yet in verse 8, the psalmist says, **“Take notice you foolish ones! When will you become wise?”** Even though it seems like they prosper, verse 11 shows what God knows. HE knows all human plans and the plans are futile.

So God knows all things and will judge according to His will, we aren’t to try and make our own judgments, because God will make His judgments in His time.

But while we are here on the earth, remember what the psalmist writes in verses 16-19. **“Who will rise up for me against the wicked? Who will stand against the evildoers for me?...When I said ‘my foot is slipping,’ your unfailing love, Lord, supported me. When anxiety was great within me, your consolation brought me joy.”**

These verses show us the comfort that God gives to us. When times are anxious around us, when we slip and fall, He stands before us. He stands for us. He stands with us. As the psalmist writes in verse 22, the Lord has become his fortress and the rock in whom we take refuge. Take refuge in the Lord. He is the fortress that we cling to, and the judge who will judge on the last day.

Take heart O, you His people. You will not be left on the outside looking in. For what Christ has done for you, has made you righteous, not wicked, before the Lord.

Prayer—Gracious God, even when it seems like evil and darkness are running rampant in this land, remind us, that you are our God. You are the judge. You protect and save your people. Watch over us, defend us from all harm, and continue to guide us in your ways to paths of light. Amen.

Today’s Devotion was written by Seminarian Chris Deneen

Thursday November 19, 2020

Read Psalm 95

Come Into His Presence

“Let us come into His presence with thanksgiving; let us make a joyful noise to Him with songs of praise!” (v. 2). We may find setting aside time each day hard to thank, praise, and sing to the LORD. At various times, difficulties may harden our hearts: pandemic adjustments, political unrest, unsureness of tomorrow, or other trials that keep coming at us. The weakness of our sinful flesh battles the Holy Spirit living in us. In the temporal realm—Christ’s Kingdom here on earth—the Holy Spirit points to our High Priest, Jesus, the Son of God, the Christ:

Scripture reveals: **“Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says, “Today, if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, on the day of testing in the wilderness . . . for whoever has entered God’s rest has also rested from his works as God did from His. Let us therefore strive to enter that rest, so that no one may fall by the same sort of disobedience . . . For we do not have a High Priest [Jesus] who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.”** (Hebr 3: 7-8; 4:10-11, 15-16).

The Reformers confess God’s will, power, and grace through means of the Word of Christ by declaring: “It is God’s will that His Word should be heard and that a person’s ears not be closed (Psalm 95:8). With this Word the Holy Spirit is present and opens hearts.” (*The Formula of Concord, Epitome*, Article II:5, see Article II:1-18).

Through the gift of faith in Christ Jesus alone, we have the forgiveness of sins, we trust God in our weakness; Trusting He takes care of all our needs and gives us rest, grace, and mercy, in times of need. Jesus calls us to come to Him, **“Come to Me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest”** (Matthew 11:27-28). Resting in Christ, there is always reason for thanks and praise!

Prayer. Lord Jesus, teach us to profit by warning examples of others. So govern us that we do not harden our hearts, as did those at Meribah. Incline our hearts to Your Gospel, and enable us by Your good Spirit to receive with meekness the engrafted Word that is able to save the soul. Suffer us not O Lord, to fall from You, neither in life nor in death. Amen. (Prayer from, *Reading the Psalms with Luther*)



Albrecht Dürer - Christ on the Cross with Three Angels

“Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins” (Hebrews 9:22)

Today’s Devotion was written by Pre-seminary Student Nathan Tritch

Friday November 20, 2020

Read Psalm 96

Sing to the Lord!

Psalm 96 is an outstanding example of a song of praise. The psalmist expounds on the mighty works of God: His mighty works of salvation, His glorious creation, and His continual reign as God of the universe. On the one hand, we could profitably spend some time meditating on the truth of the psalm and the greatness of our God, but we would be missing a big part of what this psalm is about.

Over and over again throughout the psalm, the psalm does not just remind us about God but gives us commands. Sing to the Lord! Bless His name! Tell of His salvation! Declare His glory! It is good to know that God is our Creator and Redeemer, but it is even better to proclaim the good news about who He is and what He does for us. We live in a world that does not know God. **"Say among the nations, 'The LORD reigns!'"** Psalm 96 calls us to live our beliefs and to share what we know to be true.

In a world that is constantly proclaiming idols to us, we are called to proclaim the truth about God both in our actions and in our words. The psalm concludes with a beautiful thought. When we say that all the earth will praise the Lord, we mean the whole creation. The heavens and earth know their Creator and the beauty of nature is a testimony to the glory of God. Our lives and words are also to be a testimony to the God we know.

Prayer: Almighty God, we know that you are Lord of lords and God of gods, Creator of all things. Teach us to better know Your great glory, seeing in our daily lives the richness of Your blessings. Lead us in Your ways so that our lives testify to Your goodness. Give us words to speak so that we might proclaim You to those who still do not know You as their Creator and Redeemer. Keep us always in Your mercy that we would always remember Your greatest work of salvation accomplished for us in Jesus Christ, in Whose holy and precious name we pray. Amen.

Today's Devotion was written by Seminarian Case Farney

Saturday November 21

Read [Psalm 97](#)

“The Lord Reigns (Thank God!)”

In [1 Samuel 8](#), the people of Israel demanded that Samuel appoint them a king to “rule over them and lead them into battle”. Their true King, the Lord God, reluctantly acceded to their wish only after He had Samuel warn them of the down side. A human king would take their sons and put them in his army. He’d take their lands and crops for his own purposes. He’d take their daughters to be laborers for him. Ultimately, **“you shall be his slaves”**.

This, of course, wasn’t anything new. All peoples of all times who have lived under human “kings” (or Presidents, Prime Ministers, etc.) have been forced to endure the same. Taxation, regulation, eminent domain, and mandatory government service (not to mention corruption and worse) are part of daily life under a human “king”. The root of the sin here is: **“they have rejected Me from being king over them.”**

Just 2 ½ weeks ago we held our elections. And still, votes are being counted, both parties have claimed victory, and court fights are beginning to form. It’s obvious that before it’s all over there will be division, hurt, and pain spread everywhere. And the root of the sin is the same.

But that’s where Psalm 97 brings good news: **“The Lord reigns, let the earth rejoice!”** Choosing earthly kings or presidents doesn’t change the fact that **“righteousness and justice are the foundation of His throne.”**

Some of what is described won’t occur before the Last Day (like the worshippers of false gods being **“put to shame”**), but **“Zion hears and is glad”** today and every day. Zion is Jerusalem – the Church – and has seen and experiences God’s righteousness, **“exalting Him far above all gods”**. Before the beginning of time, God elected Himself LORD over everything (on a “one God/one vote” basis), and one of His first acts was to elect His only Son to live and die to pay the price for our sins. And so, **“He preserves the lives of His saints; He delivers them from the hand of the wicked.”** He creates salvation **“for the righteous and joy for the upright in heart.”**

Prayer - Heavenly Father, Lord of Life, teach us to rejoice under Your rule and to give thanks to Your Holy Name. In Jesus Name, Amen.

Today’s Devotion is from Pastor Jeff Nelson

Monday November 23, 2020
Read Psalm 98

Remember – We Win

As I read Psalm 98, it felt like a Psalm for a different time. There is joy and confidence and celebration. It is a victory song that spreads from “**the house of Israel**” to “**all the earth**” to the sea, the rivers, and the hills. Israel rejoices. The whole world celebrates. Even the creation itself roars and claps and sings at the salvation of God.

Watch any two minutes of the news and you will not feel like there is a reason for the people of God, all of humanity, and the creation itself to roar, clap and sing. There’s a lot of bad news. This song doesn’t seem to fit the moment. Maybe that’s why it is perfect. Stuck in the darkness of the moment, we can despair. Stuck in the darkness of the moment, we forget the bigger story.

In April with the sports world shut down, the go to programming for many channels was to re-air classic games. In this town, that meant a regular showing of game 6 of the 2011 World Series. The drama is still thick while the home team is down to their last out...and then to their last strike. But the drama is different. We know how it is going to end. And the end is something to celebrate. You can watch and get swept up into the emotion, even when things don’t look good and remember – we win.

On a much grander and eternally consequential scale, this Psalm reminds us of the end of the story. And remember – we win. “**For (the Lord) has done marvelous things.**” Christ has died and risen. The victory is won. “**The Lord has made known his salvation.**” To you! This victory is yours by faith. Things will often look dark in this sin stained world. But you know that no matter how dark things may get. The enemies of God and His people (sin, death, the devil) war against us. But to borrow from Martin Luther, “*were they to take our house, goods, honor, child, or spouse, though life be wrenched away, they cannot win the day. The Kingdom’s ours forever!*” In your dark hour, remember that through Christ – we win.

Prayer – Dear Jesus, lead me to face even my dark hours in the knowledge that the eternal victory is mine through You. Amen.

Today’s Devotion was written by Pastor Jason