

“The Lord’s Call to Repentance”



5 PRAY THE PSALM OF THE WEEK Psalm 85:5-6; 18:1-2, 27, 32, 49

The sorrows of Sheol sur- | rounded me;*
 the snares of death con- | fronted me.
 In my distress I called up- | on the Lord,*
 He heard my voice from His | temple.
 I will love You, O | Lord, my strength.*
 The Lord is my rock and my | fortress.
 For You will save the humble | people,*
 but will bring down | haughty looks.
 It is God who arms | me with strength,*
 and makes my way | perfect.
 Therefore I will give thanks to | You, O Lord,*
 and sing praises | to Your name.

6 SAY TOGETHER THE VERSE OF THE WEEK Matthew 4:17
 “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”

7 READ THE SCRIPTURE AND DEVOTION (OTHER SIDE OF THE PAGE)

8 PRAY THE PRAYER OF THE WEEK

O Lord, we implore You favorably to hear the prayers of Your people that we, who are justly punished for our offenses, may be mercifully delivered by Your goodness, for the glory of Your name; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Savior, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

9 PRAYER FOR OURSELVES AND OTHERS

10 SING OR SAY THE HYMN OF THE WEEK
Salvation Unto Us Has Come

TLH 377, LSB 555
 Paul Speratus



1. Salvation unto us has come
 By God’s free grace and favor;
 Good works cannot avert our doom,
 They help and save us never.
 Faith looks to Jesus Christ alone,
 Who did for all the world atone;
 He is our one Redeemer.

6. Since Christ hath full atonement made
 And brought to us salvation,
 Each Christian therefore may be glad
 And build on this foundation.
 Thy grace alone, dear Lord, I plead,
 Thy death is now my life indeed,
 For Thou hast paid my ransom.

1 BLESS YOURSELF WITH THE HOLY CROSS AND SAY:
 In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

2 SAY THE APOSTLES’ CREED
 I believe in God, the Father Almighty,
 Maker of heaven and earth.
 And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our
 Lord, who was conceived by the Holy
 Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered
 under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died
 and was buried. He descended into hell.
 The third day He rose again from the
 dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at
 the right hand of God, the Father
 Almighty. From thence He will come to
 judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy
 Christian church, the communion of
 saints, the forgiveness of sins, the
 resurrection of the body, and the life
 everlasting. Amen.

3 PRAY THE LORD’S PRAYER
 Our Father, who art in
 heaven,
 hallowed be Thy name,
 Thy kingdom come,
 Thy will be done on earth as it
 is in heaven.
 Give us this day our daily
 bread;
 and forgive us our trespasses
 as we forgive those who
 trespass against us;
 and lead us not into
 temptation,
 but deliver us from evil.
 For Thine is the kingdom and
 the power and the glory
 forever and ever. Amen.

4 PRAY THE MORNING OR EVENING PRAYER

Morning. 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.

Evening. I thank you, my
 heavenly Father, through Jesus
 Christ, Your dear Son, that You
 have graciously kept me this day;
 and I pray that You would forgive
 me all my sins where I have done
 wrong, and graciously keep me this
 night. For into Your hands, I
 commend myself, my body and
 soul, and all things. Let Your holy
 angel be with me, that the evil foe
 may have no power over me. Amen.

Around the Word Devotions + the week of February 5-11, 2023

THEME OF THE WEEK: The Lord's Call to Repentance

Pre-Lent is singularly unique in the church year. Advent prepares your heart for Christmas and Lent prepares you for Easter. But only pre-Lent prepares you for preparation. But such is the state of all who wish to cast out the heart of stone through repentance and receive a heart of flesh by faith (Ezek 36:26). The 70th, 60th, and 50th days before Easter (using rounded numbers) transition the faithful from Epiphany to Lent by focusing on justification, with the parable of the Laborers in the Vineyard of Grace as the governing text. All of the lessons join

John the Baptist and Jesus to proclaim, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matt 3:2; 4:17).

SUN

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 20:1-16 Laborers in the Vineyard of Grace

Keeping score in sports is a good thing, but in the churchly vineyard it is contrary to grace. See how the scorekeepers in this parable are absorbed with the demands of the law, but are devoid of the gospel. But woven throughout the narrative is a calendric sketch of the Passion of Christ. At the first hour, He incarcerated that you might be set free. He was crucified for your sins at the third hour. At the sixth hour He hung in darkness to dispel the darkness of death. He bowed His head in death at the ninth hour. At the twelfth hour he was buried in an unmarked grave, leaving your sins entombed before rising from the dead. *O*

Lord, support me all the day long as I labor in Your vineyard. Then grant me a safe lodging and peace at the last. Amen.

MON

SCRIPTURE: Psalm 23 The Lord is My Shepherd

PSALM INTRODUCTION: St. Augustine said of the two Testaments, "The New is in the Old concealed; the Old is in the New revealed." See how this insight helps you pray this beloved Psalm according to its fulfillment in Christ. The Lord is the Shepherd greater than David, who leads you in the pastures of the gospel and beside the waters of baptism. Jesus leads you on the path of righteousness (justification) and through the valley of death with the rod and staff of the law and the gospel. And He prepares a sacramental table before You, overflowing with salvation, goodness, and mercy, to keep you all the days of your life. *Amid surrounding foes / Thou dost my table spread; My cup with blessing overflows, And joy exalts my head (TLH 426.5). Amen.*

TUE

SCRIPTURE: 1 Corinthians 9:24-10:5 Running the Race, Living in the Wilderness

Two closely-related metaphors in this text describe your life in Christ. First, you *run the race* that you may obtain the prize, that is, the crown of eternal life. But this is no "participation trophy!" Rather, it is the reward given by grace to those disciplined under the law. Second, you *live in the wilderness*. Old Israel had her own "Lenten" journey of forty years in the desert, but always graced by God's presence: the cloud and the sea, the spiritual food and drink, yes, Christ Himself. So run that you may obtain the prize. Live that you may avoid the idolatry of Old Israel. And do it all to the glory of God in Christ. *O Lord, may Your Word be a lamp to my feet and a light to my path as I run the race of faith with perseverance and live in daily repentance. Amen.*

WED

SCRIPTURE: Jeremiah 1:4-10 "I Have Put My Words in Your Mouth"

Jeremiah is perhaps the best example of a prophet who had to eat his words before he could preach them. Jeremiah became a mouthpiece for the Lord by hearing and believing Yahweh's message before preaching it to Israel. The Lord says to Jeremiah, in effect, "Eat this book by faith, Jeremiah, for these words of law and gospel will make the difference between life and death for my people Israel." As you hear Jeremiah's words of law and gospel this Lent, "pluck up and break down" everything in you that is not of Christ. And dwell at the foot of the cross, where Christ plants a new vineyard for Himself. *So in Scripture, song, and story, Savior, may Your voice be heard, Till our eyes behold Your glory / Give us ears to hear Your Word (LSB 584.2). Amen.*

THU

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 25:14-30 The Parable of the Talents

In 1969 a few feminists mimeographed the first copy of the book, *Our Bodies, Ourselves*. This self-help manual claimed that women needed to reclaim ownership of their own bodies. But you, O sinner, cannot claim to own anything that God has created. As today's familiar parable teaches, you are but a steward (literally "householder"), charged to manage what God has entrusted to you, with full accountability on the last day (Matt 25:31-46). So use the *five* books of Moses to find the *two* natures of the *one* Christ, as sure as you consecrate your body and soul to God's keeping, until by grace you hear the words, "Well done, Thou good and faithful servant." *Into Your hands, O Lord, I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Amen.*

FRI

SCRIPTURE: Acts 17:22-34 Paul Preaches in the Areopagus

If preaching to the baptized is *familiar* speech, then preaching to the unbaptized is the *intrusive word*. Paul's sermon in the Areopagus is an example of the latter, an abiding reminder that wise man (*homo sapien*) is also religious man (*homo religiosus*). See how St. Paul preaches to the unbaptized to lead them to Holy Baptism! The Father does not live in temples made by man (v. 24), for He is the Creator over all. He sent His Son for all (v. 31), calling you to behold, believe, and be baptized. And He works through the Spirit to call, gather, enlighten, and sanctify the faithful (vss. 27-30). *Glide on, O glorious Sun, and bring / The gift of healing on Your wing; To ev'ry dull and clouded sense / The clearness of Your light dispense (LSB 401.3). Amen.*

SAT

SCRIPTURE: Psalm 114 Tremble in the Presence of the Lord

PSALM INTRODUCTION: This Psalm builds on the background of the exodus as the supreme redemptive act in the Old Testament. Four strophes (think hymn stanzas) of two verses each call you to see how the old exodus foreshadows the new and greater exodus from sin in Christ. Here you join the psalmist to sing that God made His sanctuary with Judah (vss. 1-2), how the sea and the mountains fled from His presence (vss. 3-4), that their trembling is a mystery to human reason (vss. 5-6), and how the earth trembles at the presence of the Lord (vss. 7-8). Glory to You, O Father, for You led Israel out of Egypt. *Glory to You, O Son, for You called me out of the Egypt of sin. Glory to You, O Spirit, for You have made me a son of the promise by faith. Amen.*

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