

The Sixth Sunday of Easter

May 5, 2024

Love Divine, All Loves Excelling

Lutheran Service Book 700, Lutheran Worship 286, The Lutheran Hymnal 351



1 Love di - vine, all loves ex - cel - ling, Joy of
2 Breathe, O breathe Thy lov - ing Spir - it In - to
3 Come, Al - might - y, to de - liv - er; Let us
4 Fin - ish then Thy new cre - a - tion, Pure and



heav'n, to earth come down! Fix in us Thy
ev - 'ry trou - bled breast; Let us all in
all Thy life re - ceive; Sud - den - ly re -
spot - less let us be; Let us see Thy



hum - ble dwell - ing, All Thy faith - ful mer - cies crown.
Thee in - her - it; Let us find Thy prom - ised rest.
turn, and nev - er, Nev - er - more Thy tem - ples leave.
great sal - va - tion Per - fect - ly re - stored in Thee,



Je - sus, Thou art all com - pas - sion, Pure, un -
Take a - way the love of sin - ning; Al - pha
Thee we would be al - ways bless - ing, Serve Thee
Changed from glo - ry in - to glo - ry, Till in



bound - ed love Thou art; Vis - it us with
and O - me - ga be; End of faith, as
as Thy hosts a - bove, Pray and praise Thee
heav'n we take our place, Till we cast our



Thy sal - va - tion, En - ter ev - 'ry trem - bling heart.
its be - gin - ning, Set our hearts at lib - er - ty.
with - out ceas - ing, Glo - ry in Thy per - fect love.
crowns be - fore Thee, Lost in won - der, love, and praise!

Public domain

L In the name of the Father and the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

L Christ is risen! Alleluia!

C Christ is risen indeed! Alleluia!

L Our help is in the name of the Lord,

C who made heaven and earth. (*Psalm 124:8*)

L Who can discern his errors? Forgive my hidden faults.

C Keep your servant also from willful sins; may they not rule over me. (*Psalm 19:12, 13*)

L If You, O Lord, kept a record of sins, O Lord who could stand?

C But with You there is forgiveness; therefore You are feared. (*Psalm 130:3–4*)

L Let us, confess before God that we have sinned in thought, word, and deed, and as His people let us take refuge in His infinite mercy seeking His grace for the sake of Christ, saying:

C God, be merciful to me, a sinner, forgive us our sins, and lead us to everlasting life. Amen.

(*Luke 18:13*)

L Almighty God, merciful Father, in Your holy Church, You daily and richly forgive us our sins and grant us new life through Your Spirit. Be in our midst, enliven our faith, and graciously receive our prayer and praise; through Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

C Amen.

Introit Psalm 66:1–2, 8–9, 20; antiphon Psalm 66:16

L Come and hear, all you who fear God,
and I will tell what he has done for my soul.

C Shout for joy to God, all the earth;
sing the glory of his name; give to him glorious praise!

L Bless our God, O peoples;
let the sound of his praise be heard,

C who has kept our soul among the living
and has not let our feet slip.

L Blessèd be God,
because he has not rejected my prayer or removed his steadfast love from me!

C Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

L Come and hear, all you who fear God,
and I will tell what he has done for my soul.

Kyrie

- L** O Lord, **C** Have Mercy on us.
L O Christ, **C** Have Mercy on us.
L O Lord, **C** Have Mercy on us.

Gloria in Excelsis ~ Glory to God in the Highest

- L** Glory to God in the highest, and peace to his people on earth.
C Lord God, heavenly King, almighty God and Father: We worship You, we give You thanks, and we praise You for Your glory.
L Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father, You are Lord and God, You are the Lamb of God:
C Lord Jesus Christ, You take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us.
L Lord Jesus Christ, You are seated at the right hand of the Father; and we ask you to graciously receive our prayer.
C For You alone are the Holy One,
You alone are the Lord,
You alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

Collect of the Day

- L** Let us pray: O God, the giver of all that is good, by Your holy inspiration grant that we may think those things that are right and by Your merciful guiding accomplish them; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Acts 10:34–48

³⁴Peter opened his mouth and said: “Truly I understand that God shows no partiality, ³⁵but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him. ³⁶As for the word that he sent to Israel, preaching good news of peace through Jesus Christ (he is Lord of all), ³⁷you yourselves know what happened throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee after the baptism that John proclaimed: ³⁸how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power. He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him. ³⁹And we are witnesses of all that he did both in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a tree, ⁴⁰but God raised him on the third day and made him to appear, ⁴¹not to all the people but to us who had been chosen by God as witnesses, who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. ⁴²And he commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one appointed by God to be judge of the living and the dead. ⁴³To him all the prophets bear witness that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.”

⁴⁴While Peter was still saying these things, the Holy Spirit fell on all who heard the word. ⁴⁵And the believers from among the circumcised who had come with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit was poured out even on the Gentiles. ⁴⁶For they were hearing them speaking in tongues and extolling God. Then Peter declared, ⁴⁷“Can anyone withhold water for baptizing these people, who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?” ⁴⁸And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked him to remain for some days.

- L** This is the Word of the Lord.
C Thanks be to God.

Gradual adapt. from Matthew 28:7; Hebrews 2:7; Psalm 8:6

- L** Christ has risen from the dead.
- C** **God the Father has crowned him with glory and honor,**
- L** He has given him dominion over the works of his hands;
- C** **He has put all things under his feet.**

Psalm 98

- L** ¹Praise the LORD!
Praise God in his sanctuary; praise him in his mighty heavens!
- C** ²**Praise him for his mighty deeds; praise him according to his excellent greatness!**
- L** ³Praise him with trumpet sound; praise him with lute and harp!
- C** ⁴**Praise him with tambourine and dance; praise him with strings and pipe!**
- L** ⁵Praise him with sounding cymbals; praise him with loud clashing cymbals!
- C** ⁶**Let everything that has breath praise the LORD! Praise the LORD!**

1 John 5:1–8

¹Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God, and everyone who loves the Father loves whoever has been born of him. ²By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and obey his commandments. ³For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome. ⁴For everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. ⁵Who is it that overcomes the world except the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?

⁶This is he who came by water and blood—Jesus Christ; not by the water only but by the water and the blood. And the Spirit is the one who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth. ⁷For there are three that testify: ⁸the Spirit and the water and the blood; and these three agree.

- L** This is the Word of the Lord.
- C** **Thanks be to God.**

Verse of the Day: Romans 6:9; John 16:33b

- L** Alleluia, Alleluia. We know that Christ being raised from the dead will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. Alleluia.
- C** **Alleluia, Alleluia. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world. Alleluia.**

John 15: 9–17

- L** The Holy Gospel according to St. John, the 15th chapter.
- C** **Glory to You, O Lord.**

⁹[Jesus said:] “As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love. ¹⁰If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commandments and abide in his love. ¹¹These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.

¹²“This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. ¹³Greater love has no one than this, that someone lays down his life for his friends. ¹⁴You are my friends if you do what I command you. ¹⁵No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you. ¹⁶You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever

you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you. ¹⁷These things I command you, so that you will love one another.”

- L** This is the Gospel of the Lord.
- C** Praise to You, O Christ.

The Apostles' Creed

C 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

Dear Christians, One and All, Rejoice

Lutheran Service Book 633, Lutheran Worship 353, The Lutheran Hymnal 387
Stanzas 1-6



1 Dear Chris-tians, one and all, re - joice, With ex - ul - ta - tion
2 Fast bound in Sa-tan's chains I lay; Death brood-ed dark - ly
3 My own good works all came to naught, No grace or mer - it
4 But God had seen my wretch-ed state Be - fore the world's foun -



spring - ing, And with u - nit - ed heart and voice And ho - ly
o'er me. Sin was my tor - ment night and day; In sin my
gain - ing; Free will a - gainst God's judg - ment fought, Dead to all
da - tion, And mind - ful of His mer - cies great, He planned for



rap - ture sing - ing, Pro-claim the won - ders God has done, How
moth-er bore me. But dai - ly deep - er still I fell; My
good re - main - ing. My fears in - creased till sheer de - spair Left
my sal - va - tion. He turned to me a fa - ther's heart; He



His right arm the vic - t'ry won. What price our ran-som cost Him!
life be - came a liv - ing hell, So firm - ly sin pos - sessed me.
on - ly death to be my share; The pangs of hell I suf - fered.
did not choose the eas - y part But gave His dear - est trea - sure.

5 God said to His belovèd Son:
“It’s time to have compassion.
Then go, bright jewel of My crown,
And bring to all salvation.
From sin and sorrow set them free;
Slay bitter death for them that they
May live with You forever.”

6 The Son obeyed His Father’s will,
Was born of virgin mother;
And God’s good pleasure to fulfill,
He came to be my brother.
His royal pow’r disguised He bore;
A servant’s form, like mine, He wore
To lead the devil captive.

Public domain

Devotional thoughts:

“Now, where were we?”

Have you ever experienced this? Someone is telling you a fascinating story or recounting an intriguing event and they are interrupted by a phone call or called away by some pressing matter. You are eager to hear more but you must patiently wait to learn the rest of the story.

Our Gospel lesson for this week is a bit like that. The architects of our series of Sunday readings ended the reading last week in the middle of Jesus’ discussion of the vine and the branches. Unless you chose to read ahead, you had to patiently wait for this Sunday to hear the conclusion of Jesus’ lesson.

When you look at the beginning of John 15 in the Bible, you will notice that this section is titled with Jesus’ opening words of verse 1, “I am the true vine.” The section ends with verse 17. Unfortunately, our Gospel lesson ended last week with verse 8 and we were forced to wait until this week to hear the rest of Jesus’ instructions regarding the vine and branches.

This is important to remember when we read verse 9, “As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love.” Abiding in Jesus’ love is the result of being connected to the true vine. The Father’s love comes to us through Jesus! When we disconnect ourselves from Jesus, we disconnect ourselves from His love! Jesus does not want this to happen! May it never happen to us!

When you walk through a vineyard in the fall, you will see the rich clusters of fruit clinging to the vine. What does this look like in the lives of Christian people who abide in the True Vine? Jesus answers this question in verse 10. “If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commandments and abide in his love.” The fruit of love in our lives is displayed by keeping the Father’s commandments.

This seems odd to many contemporary Americans. Children of the Me Generation have often absorbed the notion that “self-realization” and “self-fulfillment” are the ultimate goals of life, believing that laws and commandments simply get in the way!

To illustrate the point, I once passed a church that proudly displayed a large banner declaring “Judgment Free Zone” next to the door! The implication is that God’s laws are not enforced here. They falsely imagine that God’s laws are in opposition to God’s love. But Jesus says keeping His commandments is the definition of abiding in His love.

Next Sunday is Mother’s Day. As you prepare for this day, let us pause to reflect on Jesus’ words as they relate to our mothers.

We all love our mothers. On Mother’s Day, we buy them flowers and candy, take them to dinner, and give them a place of honor that they so well deserve.

Imagine a child who did all of this on Mother's Day but for the other 364 days of the year simply ignored everything she said. He refused to clean his room. He refused to go to bed on time or turn off his electronic device. In short, he disobeyed all of her commands, yet he claimed to love her. What do you think? Is this a loving child? No, I think not. This is a self-absorbed child that only loves himself.

I'm sure that mothers will agree. They would rather have an obedient and caring child throughout the year than one day of feigned and insincere honor. We truly honor our mothers when we treat them with love and respect all year long.

Let us remember the truth of Luther's words in the explanation of the Fourth Commandment: We should fear and love God so that we do not despise or anger our parents and other authorities, but honor them, serve and obey them, love and cherish them.

Jesus goes on to explain that abiding in His love and keeping His commandments leads to joy! True joy does not come from self-absorbed self-realization. He declared, "These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full." Other paths to full joy are delusional.

Jesus says that love is not found in self-fulfillment but in self-sacrifice! In verses 12 and 13, He declares, "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that someone lays down his life for his friends." Jesus spoke these words on Maundy Thursday evening, shortly after washing the feet of the disciples. In a few hours, He would prove His love by laying down His life on the cross for you and me and the entire world of sinners.

Mothers often are an example of self-sacrificing love. Beyond the challenges of pregnancy and childbirth, there are 3 A.M. feedings and countless diaper changes. There is comforting a crying child and trips to the emergency room. And sometimes, there is the literal sacrifice of life for the sake of a child.

Some years ago, a mother took her infant to the post office in Cassopolis, Michigan. Being a good mother, she carried her baby into the building with her. When her business was done, she carried her baby back to her car. Unfortunately, as she walked along the side of the building, a careless driver pressed the accelerator pedal instead of the brake. The car raced out of control toward the mother and child. This mother's last act of love was to raise her baby over her head as the car ended her life. "Greater love has no one than this!"

Because of Jesus' sacrifice, we are no longer enemies of God. In fact, we are no longer servants. Now we are Jesus' friends. Although by human nature, we rejected Him, He chose us! He chose us to be His for time and all eternity! For that reason, He laid down His life for us in love.

On Thursday, we will celebrate Ascension Day! Jesus' earthly work is complete. At His Ascension, He returned to heaven to sit at the right hand of God. However, there is still work to do here on earth. We are the ones called to do it in love.

Jesus called us to be His. He appointed us to go and bear fruit! We bear fruit when we love one another. We bear fruit when we love the sinful people around us. We bear fruit when we call people to repentance and share with them the love of God in the forgiveness won for us by Jesus on the cross. We bear fruit when we share in Jesus' work and pray for its success.

In love, God has given us great and wonderful gifts. Let us learn to share these gifts with others in self-sacrificing love so that, in a small way, we can be a reflection of the greatest gift of love, Jesus' sacrifice for sinners on the cross.

"Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand; do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:4-7).

God's richest blessings to you in Christ.

Prayers

L Heavenly Father, You invite us freely to come and hear Your Word. Bless and increase our faith, that we may rightly fear You and learn what You have done for our souls.

C Amen.

L Lord of all, You make known the good news of peace through our Savior, Jesus Christ. Bless and direct the work of our missionaries, that in every nation there would be people who fear God, do what is right and, believing in Jesus, receive forgiveness of sins through His name.

C Amen.

L Father of love, out of great love for You and for sinners, our Lord Jesus laid down His life for the world. Increase in us true love for one another, that like our Lord, we may also lay down our lives for our friends.

C Amen.

L O God of peace, during this time of war in the ancient land of Jesus' birth and in Ukraine, we pray that You would grant a swift end to the conflict and lasting peace, that right and justice would prevail, and that You would grant Your mighty hand of protection to the innocent and helpless.

C Amen.

L Visit us in Your compassion, O Lord. Deliver the sick from their infirmity, the troubled from their afflictions, the grieving from their sorrow, and the dying from their fear. May all who cry to You receive grace according to Your will. Help each of us to bear our crosses with patience and grace.

C Amen.

L O Lord, heavenly Father, we gratefully remember the sufferings and death of Your dear Son, Jesus Christ, for our salvation. Rejoicing in His victorious resurrection from the dead, we draw strength from His ascension before You, where He ever stands for us as our own High Priest. Gather us together from the ends of the earth to celebrate with all the faithful the marriage feast of the Lamb in His kingdom, which has no end. Graciously receive our prayers, deliver and preserve us, for to You alone we give all glory, honor and worship, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

C 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.

C 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.

L Let us bless the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

L The Lord bless us, defend us from all evil, and bring us to everlasting life.

C Amen.

Dear Christians, One and All, Rejoice

Lutheran Service Book 633, Lutheran Worship 353, The Lutheran Hymnal 387
Stanzas 7-10

- 7 To me He said: “Stay close to Me,
I am your rock and castle.
Your ransom I Myself will be;
For you I strive and wrestle.
For I am yours, and you are Mine,
And where I am you may remain;
The foe shall not divide us.
- 8 “Though he will shed My precious blood,
Me of My life bereaving,
All this I suffer for your good;
Be steadfast and believing.
Life will from death the vict’ry win;
My innocence shall bear your sin,
And you are blest forever.
- 9 “Now to My Father I depart,
From earth to heav’n ascending,
And, heavn’ly wisdom to impart,
The Holy Spirit sending;
In trouble He will comfort you
And teach you always to be true
And into truth shall guide you.
- 10 “What I on earth have done and taught
Guide all your life and teaching;
So shall the kingdom’s work be wrought
And honored in your preaching.
But watch lest foes with base alloy
The heav’nly treasure should destroy;
This final word I leave you.”

Public domain

Service Notes:

One person may serve as Leader or this may be shared with a number of individuals.

Read one or more of the lessons. Hymns may be sung or read. Use as much or little of this service as you would like.

Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are from are from The ESV® Bible (The Holy Bible, English Standard Version®), copyright © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Some liturgical portions are adapted from Lutheran Service Book © 2006 Concordia Publishing House. Lutheran Service Book License: 10002731 Christ Lutheran Church, Stevensville, Michigan

Hymns are in the public domain. The remainder of this work including adaptations and the Devotional thoughts © 2024 Philip G. Quardokus. All rights reserved.

Enhancing Your Worship

Meditating on God's Word and Works

I will meditate on your wondrous works. Psalm 119:27
My eyes are awake through the night watches,
That I may meditate on Your word. Psalm 119:148 NKJV

The Week of The Sixth Sunday of Easter May 6 - 11, 2024

Introduction

Most modern forms of mediation turn a person inward. Biblical meditation turns a person outward toward what God has said and done especially what He has said and done through Jesus for our salvation.

Each Sunday has its own special theme directing us to meditate on God's word and actions. This theme is found in the Propers of the Day (the parts of the service that change week to week). From Advent through the Easter season these themes focus our attention on the life of Jesus from His birth to His death and resurrection. There is always much more in the propers than can be covered in any Sunday service. God willing, I will use the propers for Sunday to provide you with a devotion each day to help you mediate on what God has done for you.

Monday

- L** In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.
- C** Amen.

Verse of the Day: Romans 6:9; John 16:33b

- L** Alleluia, Alleluia. We know that Christ being raised from the dead will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. Alleluia.
- C** Alleluia, Alleluia. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world. Alleluia.

Introit Psalm 66:1–2, 8–9, 20; antiphon Psalm 66:16

- L** Come and hear, all you who fear God,
and I will tell what he has done for my soul.
- C** Shout for joy to God, all the earth;
sing the glory of his name; give to him glorious praise!
- L** Bless our God, O peoples;
let the sound of his praise be heard,
- C** who has kept our soul among the living
and has not let our feet slip.
- L** Blessèd be God,
because he has not rejected my prayer or removed his steadfast love from me!
- C** Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.
- L** Come and hear, all you who fear God,
and I will tell what he has done for my soul.

- | | | | |
|----------|-----------|----------|--------------------------|
| L | O Lord, | C | Have Mercy on us. |
| L | O Christ, | C | Have Mercy on us. |
| L | O Lord, | C | Have Mercy on us. |

The selected verses of our introit are a splendid summary of Psalm 66. All the earth shouts for joy!

A while back I was at a men's retreat over a long weekend in the fall. A group of us gathered around a large screen TV to watch my favorite college football team oppose a longtime rival! It didn't look good for my team. Time was running out. But then, as only happens in dreams, our quarterback threw an incredible pass that was caught in midstride by our receiver and carried into the end zone. Joy erupted.

At that very moment, I leaped mightily into the air almost two to three inches! There was a flash of light and that instant of happiness was recorded for posterity by the camera of a good friend.

What brings you joy? Is it a Saturday afternoon victory? Is it a walk through nature? Could it be a job well done? I suppose that the list of possibilities is endless.

Nevertheless, real lasting joy comes only from God's love for sinners in Christ. Without that love, every other moment of joy soon becomes a distant memory.

"Come and hear, all you who fear God, and I will tell what he has done for my soul." He has granted me forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation. I have been granted the true joy of eternal life with Jesus! May I shout it to the world!

- L** Let us pray. Lord, thank You for listening to my daily pleas in prayer. Thank You for Your steadfast love in Christ. Grant that I may always shout for joy with all my being because of forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

Tuesday

- L** In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.
C Amen.

Verse of the Day: Romans 6:9; John 16:33b

- L** Alleluia, Alleluia. We know that Christ being raised from the dead will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. Alleluia.
C Alleluia, Alleluia. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world. Alleluia.

Kyrie

- | | | | |
|----------|-----------|----------|--------------------------|
| L | O Lord, | C | Have Mercy on us. |
| L | O Christ, | C | Have Mercy on us. |
| L | O Lord, | C | Have Mercy on us. |

- L** Let us pray: O God, the giver of all that is good, by Your holy inspiration grant that we may think those things that are right and by Your merciful guiding accomplish them; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
C Amen.

Our prayer this week is for right thinking and right action. What a concept!

A new Puritan spirit has gripped our country. Only right thinking and right action are allowed. By this, I mean the new puritan spirit of political correctness. Who defines this right thinking and right action? No one knows. It changes from year to year.

Recently, we have witnessed towering figures fall from grace because it was discovered that sometime in the past they had engaged in something that is no longer considered acceptable today, although at the time it may have been inoffensive.

Goodness, rightness, and holiness are only defined by God and His holy word. Without a doubt, much that is acceptable in our country now and in the past is unacceptable to God. Discrimination and offensive language are never a sign of God's love.

Christians have always sought right thinking and right actions. Right thinking never changes with the spirit of the age or the trends of social media. Right thinking and right actions have been constant throughout the centuries. What was wrong in the past is still wrong today. When we look into the mirror of God's holy law, I must simply fall on my knees and say:

O almighty God, merciful Father, I, a poor, miserable sinner, confess unto You all my sins and iniquities with which I have ever offended You and justly deserved Your temporal and eternal punishment. But I am heartily sorry for them and sincerely repent of them, and I pray You of Your boundless mercy and for the sake of the holy, innocent, bitter sufferings and death of Your beloved Son, Jesus Christ, to be gracious and merciful to me, a poor, sinful being.
Amen.

In response, we rejoice that:

Almighty God, our heavenly Father, has had mercy upon us and has given His only Son to die for us and for His sake forgives us all our sins. To those who believe on His name He gives power to become the children of God and has promised them His Holy Spirit. He that believes and is baptized shall be saved. Amen

Let us pray: O God, the giver of all that is good, by Your holy inspiration grant that we may think those things that are right and by Your merciful guiding accomplish them; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Wednesday

- L** In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.
- C** Amen.

Verse of the Day: Romans 6:9; John 16:33b

- L** Alleluia, Alleluia. We know that Christ being raised from the dead will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. Alleluia.
- C** **Alleluia, Alleluia. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world. Alleluia.**

Psalm 98

- L** ¹Oh sing to the LORD a new song, for he has done marvelous things!
His right hand and his holy arm have worked salvation for him.
- C** ²**The LORD has made known his salvation; he has revealed his righteousness in the sight of the nations.**
- L** ³He has remembered his steadfast love and faithfulness to the house of Israel.
All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.
- C** ⁴**Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the earth; break forth into joyous song and sing praises!**
- L** ⁵Sing praises to the LORD with the lyre, with the lyre and the sound of melody!
- C** ⁶**With trumpets and the sound of the horn make a joyful noise before the King, the LORD!**
- L** ⁷Let the sea roar, and all that fills it; the world and those who dwell in it!
- C** ⁸**Let the rivers clap their hands; let the hills sing for joy together**

- L** ⁹before the LORD, for he comes to judge the earth.
C He will judge the world with righteousness, and the peoples with equity.

Kyrie

- L** O Lord, **C** Have Mercy on us.
L O Christ, **C** Have Mercy on us.
L O Lord, **C** Have Mercy on us.

What was hinted at in our introit is fully revealed in our psalm. We sing to the Lord a new song because God has done a marvelous thing! He has worked salvation for us in Christ!

There are a few extra things for us to consider in this Psalm that are often overlooked. It begins “Oh sing to the LORD a new song.” The new song is not a newly composed song. It does not mean that fresh songs are the ones demanded by this psalm. The “new song” is the song of grace and forgiveness. The “old song” is the song of sin and death.

Here is a sample of this “new song” of the Gospel. It is recorded in Revelation 5:9.

**And they sang a new song, saying,
“Worthy are you to take the scroll
and to open its seals,
for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God
from every tribe and language and people and nation,**

What is it like to live in the time of this new song? You can catch a glimpse of it in Revelation 21:4-5:

He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.”

And he who was seated on the throne said, “Behold, I am making all things new.”

This is a marvelous thing! When you examine the words marvelous and wonderful in Scripture, you soon realize that God is the only one who can truly do things for us to marvel at with wonder in our eyes.

Everything we do is ordinary and common but Christ’s love for us is marvelous indeed! Sing to the Lord a new song!

Prayer: O Lord, thank You for making us new in Christ. Grant to us true faith to receive this new life in Christ each day as we return to baptism through repentance and drown our old selves so that a new self is raised to life, through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Thursday- The Ascension of our Lord

- L** In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.
C Amen.

Verse of the Day: Romans 6:9; John 16:33b

- L** Alleluia, Alleluia. We know that Christ being raised from the dead will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. Alleluia.
C Alleluia, Alleluia. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world. Alleluia.

Kyrie

- L** O Lord, **C** Have Mercy on us.
L O Christ, **C** Have Mercy on us.
L O Lord, **C** Have Mercy on us.

Acts 1:1–11

¹In the first book, O Theophilus, I have dealt with all that Jesus began to do and teach, ²until the day when he was taken up, after he had given commands through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen. ³To them he presented himself alive after his suffering by many proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God.

⁴And while staying with them he ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, he said, “you heard from me; ⁵for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.”

⁶So when they had come together, they asked him, “Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?” ⁷He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority. ⁸But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” ⁹And when he had said these things, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. ¹⁰And while they were gazing into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes, ¹¹and said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.”

I enjoy looking at clouds and seeing the rays of the sun stream through. It makes me think of heaven. I wonder if the disciples saw something like this as a cloud took Jesus out of their sight.

Jesus ascended into heaven to sit at the right hand of God. There, He continues to be our prophet, priest, and king.

He continues to give us His holy word through the Bible. He continues to send us pastors and teachers to share His word with us (Ephesians 4:8-16).

He continues to hear our prayers and to offer intercession for us (1 John 2:1).

He continues to rule the world for the sake of His Church (Ephesians 1:20-23).

On Ascension Day, we thank God that Jesus completed His earthly ministry of working salvation as the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. We also remember that He has left us here to bring that message to all nations (Matthew 28:18-20). Finally, it is a reminder that He will come again on the last day to take us to be with Him for all eternity (Matthew 25:31-46).

Prayer: Almighty God, as Your only-begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, ascended into the heavens, so may we also ascend in heart and mind and continually dwell there with Him, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

You may wish to conclude your devotions by singing:

On Christ's Ascension I Now Build

Lutheran Service Book 492, Lutheran Worship 150, The Lutheran Hymnal 216

Friday

L In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

Verse of the Day: Romans 6:9; John 16:33b

L Alleluia, Alleluia. We know that Christ being raised from the dead will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. Alleluia.

C Alleluia, Alleluia. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world. Alleluia.

Kyrie

L O Lord, **C** Have Mercy on us.
L O Christ, **C** Have Mercy on us.
L O Lord, **C** Have Mercy on us.

Acts 10:34–48

³⁴Peter opened his mouth and said: “Truly I understand that God shows no partiality, ³⁵but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him. ³⁶As for the word that he sent to Israel, preaching good news of peace through Jesus Christ (he is Lord of all), ³⁷you yourselves know what happened throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee after the baptism that John proclaimed: ³⁸how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power. He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him. ³⁹And we are witnesses of all that he did both in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a tree, ⁴⁰but God raised him on the third day and made him to appear, ⁴¹not to all the people but to us who had been chosen by God as witnesses, who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. ⁴²And he commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one appointed by God to be judge of the living and the dead. ⁴³To him all the prophets bear witness that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.”

⁴⁴While Peter was still saying these things, the Holy Spirit fell on all who heard the word. ⁴⁵And the believers from among the circumcised who had come with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit was poured out even on the Gentiles. ⁴⁶For they were hearing them speaking in tongues and extolling God. Then Peter declared, ⁴⁷“Can anyone withhold water for baptizing these people, who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?” ⁴⁸And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked him to remain for some days.

When I was a child, you could go to the movie theater a little bit late and it didn't matter. When the film was over, you could just stay in your seat until it started over again. When you got to the point in the film where you entered the theater, you could leave. It was very convenient for the perpetually tardy!

In our lesson from Acts this week, we have entered in the middle of the film. Peter is speaking about just meeting a gentile named Cornelius. Let's start at the beginning of Acts 10 and see what we've missed.

At Caesarea there was a man named Cornelius, a centurion of what was known as the Italian Cohort, a devout man who feared God with all his household, gave alms generously to the people, and prayed continually to God (Acts 10:1-2).

As the scene progresses, an angel appears to Cornelius saying that God has heard his prayers and he should send men to Joppa and bring back Peter.

Peter would have been hesitant to go with these men to the home of gentile so God prepared him. Three times Peter saw the vision of a sheet coming down from heaven with food on it that had been designated as “unclean” in the Old Testament. A voice directed him to eat but Peter would not. To this, Peter heard a voice say, “What God has made clean, do not call common.”

Peter was perplexed as he considered this. Just then, men from Cornelius came looking for Peter. At the direction of the Holy Spirit, Peter went the next day to see Cornelius with these men.

And now, we have caught up to Peter's speech that we read for today: The Gospel is for all!

To prove this, the gift of the Holy Spirit was poured out even on the Gentiles. They experienced their Day of Pentecost!

Today, we rejoice that we are counted among the people of God from every race, tribe, and nation (Revelation 7:9-10). Jesus is the Lamb of God who came to take away the sin of the world! He has come to take away your sin and mine no matter what our age, race, or sex. It makes no difference. “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus” (Romans 3:23-24).

Prayer: O Lord, thank You for the love that is ours in Christ Jesus. Grant that we would see the unity of Your Church in every race, in people of all ages, in women, and men. Grant that You would use us to bring the life saving Gospel to all nations through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Saturday

- L** In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.
C Amen.

Gradual adapt. from Matthew 28:7; Hebrews 2:7; Psalm 8:6

- L** Christ has risen from the dead.
C God the Father has crowned him with glory and honor,
L He has given him dominion over the works of his hands;
C He has put all things under his feet.

Verse of the Day: Romans 6:9; John 16:33b

- L** Alleluia, Alleluia. We know that Christ being raised from the dead will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. Alleluia.
C Alleluia, Alleluia. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world. Alleluia.

Kyrie

- L** O Lord, **C** Have Mercy on us.
L O Christ, **C** Have Mercy on us.
L O Lord, **C** Have Mercy on us.

1 John 5:1–8

¹Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God, and everyone who loves the Father loves whoever has been born of him. ²By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and obey his commandments. ³For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome. ⁴For everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. ⁵Who is it that overcomes the world except the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?

⁶This is he who came by water and blood—Jesus Christ; not by the water only but by the water and the blood. And the Spirit is the one who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth. ⁷For there are three that testify: ⁸the Spirit and the water and the blood; and these three agree.

Our epistle this week echoes Jesus' words in the Gospel lesson. God's love and His commandments are inseparable. John tells us in verse 3, "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments."

The world would like you to believe that God's commandments are a burden that must be abandoned in our modern age. But the world is wrong. God's commandments are not burdensome. They are the best way of expressing love to God and our neighbors.

When we fail to keep God's commandments, we fail to love! When we fail to love, we fail to keep God's commandments! Unfortunately, we fail often!

Thanks be to God, He has overcome sin, death, and the devil through the cross of Jesus. We need no longer give in to temptation from the devil, the world, or our sinful flesh. But when we do, we can daily return to God in repentance and receive forgiveness of our sins and be restored to peace with God.

Prayer: O Lord, thank You for making us part of Your family through the waters of our baptism. Thank You for making us part of Your family through the blood of Jesus shed for us on the cross. Thank You for the gift of the Spirit who has brought us to faith and keeps us in the faith. Grant that we would share this gift of salvation with those around us, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are from are from The ESV® Bible (The Holy Bible, English Standard Version®), copyright © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Enhancing Your Worship © 2024 Philip G. Quardokus. All rights reserved.