

The Fifth Sunday after Epiphany February 4, 2024

God is concerned about our needs of body and soul. In the Gospel lesson today, Jesus shows this concern by healing Peter's mother-in-law among many others. Yet a weariness of soul and spirit is much more dangerous than any illness that we face in our bodies. Jesus has come to remove all dangers to our souls so that we may renew our strength through Word and Sacrament and soar on eagle's wings!

Praise to the Lord, the Almighty

Lutheran Service Book 790, Lutheran Worship 444, The Lutheran Hymnal 39



1 Praise to the Lord, the Al - might - y, the King of cre -
2 Praise to the Lord, who o'er all things is won - drous - ly
3 Praise to the Lord, who has fear - ful - ly, won - drous - ly,
4 Praise to the Lord, who will pros - per your work and de -



a - tion! O my soul, praise Him, for He is your
reign - ing And, as on wings of an ea - gle, up -
made you, Health has be - stowed and, when heed - less - ly
fend you; Sure - ly His good - ness and mer - cy shall



health and sal - va - tion! Let all who hear Now to His
lift - ing, sus - tain - ing. Have you not seen All that is
fall - ing, has stayed you. What need or grief Ev - er has
dai - ly at - tend you. Pon - der a - new What the Al -



tem - ple draw near, Join - ing in glad ad - o - ra - tion!
need - ful has been Sent by His gra - cious or - dain - ing?
failed of re - lief? Wings of His mer - cy did shade you.
might - y can do As with His love He be - friends you.

- 5 Praise to the Lord! O let all that is in me adore Him!
All that has life and breath, come now with praises before Him!
Let the Amen
Sound from His people again;
Gladly forever adore Him!

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

C Amen.

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 13:3–5; antiphon Psalm 13:6

L I will sing to the Lord,

because he has dealt bountifully with me.

C Consider and answer me, O Lord my God;
light up my eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death,

L lest my enemy say, “I have prevailed over him,”
lest my foes rejoice because I am shaken.

C But I have trusted in your steadfast love;
my heart shall rejoice in your salvation.

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 I will sing to the Lord,
because he has dealt bountifully with me.

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 Lord, keep Your family the Church continually in the true faith that relying on the hope of Your heavenly grace we may ever be defended by Your mighty power; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
C Amen.

Isaiah 40:21–31

²¹Do you not know? Do you not hear?
Has it not been told you from the beginning?
Have you not understood from the foundations of the earth?
²²It is he who sits above the circle of the earth,
and its inhabitants are like grasshoppers;
who stretches out the heavens like a curtain,
and spreads them like a tent to dwell in;
²³who brings princes to nothing,
and makes the rulers of the earth as emptiness.

²⁴Scarcely are they planted, scarcely sown,
scarcely has their stem taken root in the earth,
when he blows on them, and they wither,
and the tempest carries them off like stubble.

²⁵To whom then will you compare me,
that I should be like him? says the Holy One.
²⁶Lift up your eyes on high and see:
who created these?
He who brings out their host by number,
calling them all by name,
by the greatness of his might,
and because he is strong in power
not one is missing.

²⁷Why do you say, O Jacob,
and speak, O Israel,
“My way is hidden from the LORD,
and my right is disregarded by my God”?
²⁸Have you not known? Have you not heard?
The LORD is the everlasting God,
the Creator of the ends of the earth.
He does not faint or grow weary;
his understanding is unsearchable.
²⁹He gives power to the faint,
and to him who has no might he increases strength.
³⁰Even youths shall faint and be weary,
and young men shall fall exhausted;

³¹but they who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength;
they shall mount up with wings like eagles;
they shall run and not be weary;
they shall walk and not faint.

L This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

Gradual Psalm 117:1–2a; 96:8

L Praise the LORD, all nations!

C Extol him, all peoples!

L For great is his steadfast love toward us,

C and the faithfulness of the LORD endures forever.

L Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name;

C bring an offering, and come into his courts!

Psalm 147:1–11

L ¹Praise the LORD!

C For it is good to sing praises to our God;

L for it is pleasant, and a song of praise is fitting.

C ²The LORD builds up Jerusalem; he gathers the outcasts of Israel.

L ³He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds.

C ⁴He determines the number of the stars; he gives to all of them their names.

L ⁵Great is our Lord, and abundant in power; his understanding is beyond measure.

C ⁶The LORD lifts up the humble; he casts the wicked to the ground.

L ⁷Sing to the LORD with thanksgiving; make melody to our God on the lyre!

C ⁸He covers the heavens with clouds; he prepares rain for the earth; he makes grass grow on the hills.

L ⁹He gives to the beasts their food, and to the young ravens that cry.

C ¹⁰His delight is not in the strength of the horse, nor his pleasure in the legs of a man,

L ¹¹but the LORD takes pleasure in those who fear him,

C in those who hope in his steadfast love.

1 Corinthians 9:16–27

¹⁶For if I preach the gospel, that gives me no ground for boasting. For necessity is laid upon me. Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel! ¹⁷For if I do this of my own will, I have a reward, but not of my own will, I am still entrusted with a stewardship. ¹⁸What then is my reward? That in my preaching I may present the gospel free of charge, so as not to make full use of my right in the gospel.

¹⁹For though I am free from all, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win more of them. ²⁰To the Jews I became as a Jew, in order to win Jews. To those under the law I became as one under the law (though not being myself under the law) that I might win those under the law. ²¹To those outside the law I became as one outside the law (not being outside the law of God but under the law of Christ) that I might win those outside the law. ²²To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all people, that by all means I might save some. ²³I do it all for the sake of the gospel, that I may share with them in its blessings.

²⁴Do you not know that in a race all the runners compete, but only one receives the prize? So run that you may obtain it. ²⁵Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. ²⁶So I do not run aimlessly; I do not box as one beating the air. ²⁷But I discipline my body and keep it under control, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified.

L This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

Verse of the Day: Mark 1:39

L Alleluia. Jesus went throughout all Galilee, preaching in their synagogues.

C and casting out demons. Alleluia. Alleluia.

Mark 1:29–39

L The Holy Gospel according to St. Mark, the 1st chapter.

C Glory to You, O Lord.

²⁹And immediately [Jesus] left the synagogue and entered the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John. ³⁰Now Simon's mother-in-law lay ill with a fever, and immediately they told him about her. ³¹And he came and took her by the hand and lifted her up, and the fever left her, and she began to serve them.

³²That evening at sundown they brought to him all who were sick or oppressed by demons. ³³And the whole city was gathered together at the door. ³⁴And he healed many who were sick with various diseases, and cast out many demons. And he would not permit the demons to speak, because they knew him.

³⁵And rising very early in the morning, while it was still dark, he departed and went out to a desolate place, and there he prayed. ³⁶And Simon and those who were with him searched for him, ³⁷and they found him and said to him, "Everyone is looking for you." ³⁸And he said to them, "Let us go on to the next towns, that I may preach there also, for that is why I came out." ³⁹And he went throughout all Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and casting out demons.

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

Hail to the Lord's Anointed

Lutheran Service Book 398, Lutheran Worship 82, The Lutheran Hymnal 59



1 Hail to the Lord's a - noint - ed, Great Da - vid's great - er Son!
 2 He comes with res - cue speed - y To those who suf - fer wrong,
 3 He shall come down like show - ers Up - on the fruit - ful earth;
 4 Kings shall fall down be - fore Him And gold and in - cense bring;



Hail, in the time ap - point - ed, His reign on earth be - gun!
 To help the poor and need - y And bid the weak be strong;
 Love, joy, and hope, like flow - ers, Spring in His path to birth.
 All na - tions shall a - dore Him, His praise all peo - ple sing.



He comes to break op - pres - sion, To set the cap - tive free,
 To give them songs for sigh - ing, Their dark - ness turn to light,
 Be - fore Him on the moun - tains Shall peace, the her - ald, go;
 To Him shall prayer un - ceas - ing And dai - ly vows as - cend;



To take a - way trans - gres - sion And rule in eq - ui - ty.
 Whose souls, con - demned and dy - ing, Were pre - cious in His sight.
 And righ - teous - ness in foun - tains From hill to val - ley flow.
 His king - dom still in - creas - ing, A kingdom with - out end.

5 O'er ev'ry foe victorious,
 He on His throne shall rest,
 From age to age more glorious,
 All blessing and all-blest.
 The tide of time shall never
 His covenant remove;
 His name shall stand forever—
 That name to us is Love.

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Devotional thoughts:

You may be familiar with The Papal Basilica of Saint Peter in the Vatican or as it is often simply called, "Saint Peter's in Rome."

The interior of St. Peter's is immense. In fact, it is larger than any other church or cathedral in the world. When you walk into St. Peter's, you will notice brass markers embedded in the floor that indicate where other major cathedrals in the world would fit inside this massive church building. It is almost 2 and a half football fields long!

As impressive as St. Peter's in Rome is, today we are going to visit another church named for St. Peter that may impress you even more. It is officially known as the Pilgrimage Church of St. Peter in Capernaum. It is inspiring not because of its architecture but because of its location.

Last week, in our Gospel lesson, Jesus began His public ministry at the synagogue in Capernaum. He was there teaching on a Sabbath day. While He was teaching, a man with an unclean spirit saw Him and cried out, "What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the Holy One of God." Jesus ordered the unclean spirit out of the man. The people in the synagogue who witnessed that miraculous event asked, "Who is this?" By the grace of God, we know who it was. On that day they witnessed the almighty power of the Son of God who had come into the world.

Following the service, Jesus left the synagogue and entered the house of Simon and Andrew. Archeologists have identified the synagogue in Capernaum. Today, the remains of a 4th-century synagogue stand upon the foundation of the synagogue from Jesus' time. But where is the house of Simon and Andrew?

In 1968, a major discovery was made. Only a stone's throw from the entrance to the synagogue, a house was discovered that is believed to be the house of Simon and Andrew.

This was a first-century home that soon became a church. Archeologists have discovered more than 150 inscriptions in several different languages at this site. They say things such as "Lord Jesus Christ, Help;" and "Christ Have Mercy." There is a high probability that Jesus lived in this house with Peter and Andrew. Suspended over the remains of the house and ancient church is a modern church known as the Pilgrimage Church of St. Peter. It has a glass floor in the center so you can look down on the remains of Peter's house. This is most likely the same house where four men opened a hole in the roof so that they could lower a paralyzed man down to Jesus' side (2:1-12)!

Following the service at the synagogue on that Sabbath day, Jesus must have walked a short distance to Peter and Andrew's house for dinner. Peter and Andrew were originally from Bethsaida (John 1:44). We don't know why they moved to Capernaum. It possibly could be that it was a more favorable place for commercial fishermen. Or possibly, Peter's wife was from Capernaum.

We know Peter was married because, in our Gospel lesson, we meet his mother-in-law. In addition, the Apostle Paul tells us that Peter had a wife (1 Corinthians 9:5).

Peter's mother-in-law was ill with a fever. I can imagine that she must have been very weak.

Not too long ago, I spoke with a man who had recovered from RSV. He told me that for several days, he was so weak that he couldn't even get out of bed. I don't know if Peter's mother-in-law was that ill but she surely could have been.

This brings us to Mark 1:31 which is the heart of the matter today. We read, "And he came and took her by the hand and lifted her up, and the fever left her, and she began to serve them."

Peter's mother-in-law must have been too weak to come to Jesus so He went to her! So too for us, Jesus comes to us in our weakness. In reality, we are so weak that we cannot even make a move toward Him. He must do it all for us.

For many of us, He first came to us in our baptism. For others, He first came to us in the sweet words of the Gospel. Martin Luther reminds us in his explanation of the Third Article of the Apostles' Creed, "I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to Him; but the Holy Spirit has called me by the Gospel, enlightened me with His gifts, sanctified and kept me in the true faith."

Second, Jesus "took her by the hand." Jesus touched her with His divine touch. Jesus touches each one of us, too. He touches us with His grace and mercy. He touches us with His word and Sacrament. Jesus does not stand at a distance from us. We are not separated from Him but He touches us.

Next, Jesus "lifted her up." We are downtrodden and heavy-laden. We are crushed by the weight of our sin and personal failings. But Jesus lifts us up from the depth of despair and grief and makes us His own. As Luther reminds us, He "has redeemed me, a lost and condemned person, purchased and won me from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil; not with gold or silver, but with His holy, precious blood and with His innocent suffering and death."

As a result, Mark tells us, "the fever left her." Peter's mother-in-law was healed. So also does Jesus heal us. Not only is He the Great Physician of the body, but more importantly, He is the Great Physician of the soul!

The dreadful disease of sin has entered every one of us. Even the great Apostle Paul declares, "The good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do" (Romans 7:19 KJV).

But Jesus has healed us from the deadly wounds of our sins. The Apostle Peter says it this way, “He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed” (1 Peter 2:24). Being healed by Jesus’ death on the cross, you will live eternally with Him!

Finally, we read, “She began to serve them.” When we are touched, lifted up, and healed by Jesus, we cannot help but serve Him. He has given us life and we live our lives for Him.

Martin Luther puts it this way, “that I may be His own and live under Him in His kingdom and serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness, just as He is risen from the dead, lives and reigns to all eternity. This is most certainly true.”

After sunset, when the Sabbath was over, people brought the sick to Jesus and Jesus healed them. As this Epiphany Season winds down, we are grateful that Jesus revealed Himself to us as the Almighty Son of God and our Savior. He has shown Himself to be full of grace and compassion.

When we serve our neighbors with the same love and compassion that Jesus showed us, people will come to Him. They will come with their hurts and anxiety. They will come with their sin-sick souls. They will come looking for healing. You and I are privileged to offer them healing in Jesus that leads to eternal life.

In the Epistle lesson from 1 Corinthians 9, the Apostle Paul tells us that he was compelled to preach the Gospel. He goes on to say, “that by all means I might save some.”

May those of us who have been touched and healed by Jesus have the same attitude as Paul that by all means we may save some.

“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 We give thanks to You, dear Father, for sending Your Son, Jesus Christ, into our flesh to preach the Gospel and cast out the works of Satan and the corruption of sin, which we could not overcome. By Your Word, rescue us from every evil of body and soul.

C Amen.

L Lord, give joy to all Your servants who share the Gospel of salvation through faith in Jesus, that many more would be saved and together we may share in the blessings of Christ.

C Amen.

L Heavenly Father, give to all Christian families the endurance that comes from Your Holy Spirit, that husbands and wives, parents and children, and all those living alone may be faithful in their duties, run their course in this life, and continue to the end in the Christian faith, ready to receive the imperishable wreath of eternal life.

C Amen.

L Almighty God, Creator of the world, You hold sway over all the powers of nature and the rulers of the earth. Graciously preserve our land, its produce and industry, and our leaders together with our people. Do not disregard us for our sins, but renew us, that our lives may be peaceful and our country governed according to Your will.

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 Guard those who protect us, especially our armed forces, police, and firefighters.

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.

C Amen.

L All these things and whatever else You know that we need, grant us, Father, for the sake of Him who died and rose again and now lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God 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.

O Holy Spirit, Grant Us Grace

Lutheran Service Book 693, Lutheran Worship 336, The Lutheran Hymnal 293



1 O Ho - ly Spir - it, grant us grace That we our Lord and Sav - ior
2 Help us that we Thy sav - ing Word In faith - ful hearts may trea - sure;
3 And when our earth - ly race is run, Death's bit - ter hour im - pend - ing,



In faith and fer - vent love em - brace And tru - ly serve Him ev - er.
Let e'er that Bread of Life af - ford New grace in rich - est mea - sure.
Then may Thy work in us be - gun Con - tin - ue till life's end - ing,



The hour of death can - not bring loss When we are shel - tered
O make us die to ev - 'ry sin, Each day cre - ate new
Un - til we glad - ly may com - mend Our souls in - to our



by the cross That can - celed our trans - gres - sions.
life with - in, That fruits of faith may flour - ish.
Sav - ior's hand, The crown of life ob - tain - ing.

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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.

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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 Fifth Sunday after Epiphany February 5 - 10, 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 meditate 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: Mark 1:39

- L** Alleluia. Jesus went throughout all Galilee, preaching in their synagogues.
C and casting out demons. Alleluia. Alleluia.

Introit Psalm 13:3–5; antiphon Psalm 13:6

- L** I will sing to the Lord,
because he has dealt bountifully with me.
C Consider and answer me, O Lord my God;
light up my eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death,
L lest my enemy say, "I have prevailed over him,"
lest my foes rejoice because I am shaken.
C But I have trusted in your steadfast love;
my heart shall rejoice in your salvation.
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 I will sing to the Lord,
because he has dealt bountifully with me.

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. |

Walter Roehrs writes in the *Concordia Self-study Commentary*, “It may take a lifetime to learn to pray this short *Psalm of David*. It tells of the triumph of faith over despair. Victory is not easy. It leaves battle scars. When misery drags on, the heart cries out in anguish: ‘How much longer must I wait before God helps me in answer to my prayer?’”¹

Through a quirk of history, I had the privilege of learning from Walter Roehrs when I was a student at Concordia Seminary in St. Louis. Because the majority of professors left the seminary in protest in early 1974, Walter Roehrs graciously came out of retirement to teach a class on the Old Testament one more time. I am certain that I did not fully appreciate that I was in the presence of a towering intellect and distinguished theologian while I was attending his class.

Now many years later, I very seldom study the Old Testament without checking to see what Roehrs has to say on the subject. I am rarely disappointed. Of course, he has a thorough knowledge of the history and content of the Old Testament. But beyond that, he has a tremendous grasp of the English language and insight into explaining God’s word in a winsome way. This is also true when it comes to Psalm 13 and the verses of our introit for this week.

The antiphon begins the introit with the final verse of Psalm 13, “I will sing to the Lord, because he has dealt bountifully with me (Psalm 13:6). This is a wonderful and appropriate sentiment. However, it is actually the end of the story. David begins the psalm by asking four times, “How long?” He pleads to the Lord, “How long will You forget me?” “How long will you hide from me?” “How long will I have sorrow in my heart?” “How long will my enemy exalt over me?”

Have you ever felt like that? If the great King David did, then I suppose it’s okay for us to feel that way, too sometimes.

But David was persistent in faith. He never gave up on God. Although life was difficult for him, he declares in verse 5, “But I have trusted in your steadfast love; my heart shall rejoice in your salvation.”

I pray that you will not grow weary in waiting for God to act for your good in His own time and way. God is a God of ultimates. He will ultimately act for your good and blessing. His ultimate goal for you is to live with Him for all eternity in heaven. We should always keep this goal in mind while we endure the temporary setbacks of life.

When we pause to see the entire panorama of what God has done for us in Christ, we will join with King David and declare, “I will sing to the Lord, because he has dealt bountifully with me” (Psalm 13:6).

L Let us pray. O Lord, let me never lose heart and become discouraged because You have not acted as quickly as I would like. Grant me faith and trust in Your steadfast love so that I may sing Your praise forever more in Jesus’ name.

C Amen.

Tuesday

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

C Amen.

Verse of the Day: Mark 1:39

L Alleluia. Jesus went throughout all Galilee, preaching in their synagogues.

C and casting out demons. Alleluia. Alleluia.

¹Walter H. Roehrs and Martin H Franzmann, joint author, *Concordia Self-Study Commentary*, electronic ed., 347 (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1998, c1979).

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 Lord, keep Your family the Church continually in the true faith that relying on the hope of Your heavenly grace we may ever be defended by Your mighty power; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen

The Bible uses many pictures to help us understand the Church. One of them is the Body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:27). Another is the Temple of God (1 Corinthians 3:17). Still another is the Bride of Christ (Ephesians 5:25-27). There are others but the one that I find most appealing is the Family of God. Here are a few Bible references that use the picture of a family for the Church: 1 John 3:1-2, Romans 8:14-17, Ephesians 2:18-19, and Galatians 4:6-7.

For the last few decades, it has appeared to me that many church leaders have preferred to view the church as a corporation or an establishment of retail religion. From my perspective, these models for understanding the church tend to make individuals expendable. Individual believers are looked upon as consumers or cogs in the corporate engine of progress.

In a family, everyone is valuable. Yes, some are leaders and more productive. Others are in need of help.

Maybe you've heard of the expression, "Crazy Aunt" or some such thing. In a family, everyone belongs even crazy aunts and uncles. We bear each other's burdens (Galatians 6:2). We build each other up in the faith (Jude 20). Everyone is loved and valuable in the family whether or not they contribute to the religious corporation or consume the products of retail religion.

Jesus has given us the privilege of calling God our Father and He has given us the prayer we share together as brothers and sisters in Christ. May we ever view each other as loved and important members of the family of God.

Let us pray: O Lord, keep Your family the Church continually in the true faith that relying on the hope of Your heavenly grace we may ever be defended by Your mighty power; 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: Mark 1:39

L Alleluia. Jesus went throughout all Galilee, preaching in their synagogues.
C and casting out demons. Alleluia. 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.

Psalm 147:1–11

- L** ¹Praise the LORD!
- C** **For it is good to sing praises to our God;**
- L** for it is pleasant, and a song of praise is fitting.
- C** ²**The LORD builds up Jerusalem; he gathers the outcasts of Israel.**
- L** ³He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds.
- C** ⁴**He determines the number of the stars; he gives to all of them their names.**
- L** ⁵Great is our Lord, and abundant in power; his understanding is beyond measure.
- C** ⁶**The LORD lifts up the humble; he casts the wicked to the ground.**
- L** ⁷Sing to the LORD with thanksgiving; make melody to our God on the lyre!
- C** ⁸**He covers the heavens with clouds; he prepares rain for the earth; he makes grass grow on the hills.**
- L** ⁹He gives to the beasts their food, and to the young ravens that cry.
- C** ¹⁰**His delight is not in the strength of the horse, nor his pleasure in the legs of a man,**
- L** ¹¹but the LORD takes pleasure in those who fear him,
- C** **in those who hope in his steadfast love.**

The Book of Psalms ends with five hallelujah psalms. Psalm 147 is the second one of them.

Hallelujah means “Praise the Lord.” God’s people have many, many reasons for praising God. Whenever we do, it is always a pleasant and pleasing thing.

Psalm 147 seems to be a psalm written to celebrate the return from exile in Babylon and the restoration of Jerusalem. The children of Israel had been carried away in defeat. The future felt hopeless but God was with them. He accomplished the impossible. He brought them home to Jerusalem. Praise the Lord!

If you have ever felt hopelessness and despair, you can relate to the feelings experienced by the children of Israel and their broken hearts. When we are feeling low, it seems like we will never sing hallelujahs again. But God lifts us up from the depths and restores us just as He did for His people of old.

Our greatest hallelujahs are sung on Easter morning when we celebrate Jesus’ resurrection. Because Jesus rose from the dead, we too shall rise from the dead and be restored to life. We will live forever with Him in the New Jerusalem of heaven. Praise the Lord!

Prayer: O Lord, let us always praise You for Your gifts of life and salvation. We ask You to bind up our broken hearts by Your grace through faith in Jesus as we look forward to an eternity with You and all believers. Amen.

Thursday

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

Verse of the Day: Mark 1:39

- L** Alleluia. Jesus went throughout all Galilee, preaching in their synagogues.
- C** and casting out demons. Alleluia. Alleluia.

Isaiah 40:21–31

- ²¹Do you not know? Do you not hear?
Has it not been told you from the beginning?
Have you not understood from the foundations of the earth?
- ²²It is he who sits above the circle of the earth,
and its inhabitants are like grasshoppers;

who stretches out the heavens like a curtain,
and spreads them like a tent to dwell in;
²³who brings princes to nothing,
and makes the rulers of the earth as emptiness.

²⁴Scarcely are they planted, scarcely sown,
scarcely has their stem taken root in the earth,
when he blows on them, and they wither,
and the tempest carries them off like stubble.

²⁵To whom then will you compare me,
that I should be like him? says the Holy One.

²⁶Lift up your eyes on high and see:
who created these?

He who brings out their host by number,
calling them all by name,
by the greatness of his might,
and because he is strong in power
not one is missing.

²⁷Why do you say, O Jacob,
and speak, O Israel,

“My way is hidden from the LORD,
and my right is disregarded by my God”?

²⁸Have you not known? Have you not heard?

The LORD is the everlasting God,
the Creator of the ends of the earth.

He does not faint or grow weary;
his understanding is unsearchable.

²⁹He gives power to the faint,
and to him who has no might he increases strength.

³⁰Even youths shall faint and be weary,
and young men shall fall exhausted;

³¹but they who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength;
they shall mount up with wings like eagles;
they shall run and not be weary;
they shall walk and not faint.

Isaiah 40 begins with these familiar words, “Comfort, comfort my people, says your God” (Isaiah 40:1). The words of comfort found in our Old Testament lesson this week are a continuation of these previous verses. They tell us that God is God! He is the God of creation. He is the God in charge of everything. And amazing but true, the everlasting God is our God!

Our great and wonderful God never gets tired. Even young people can become exhausted but God never does! Through Isaiah, God calls us to come to Him and He will renew our strength. Those who wait on the Lord will run and not be weary. They will walk and not faint.

Are you weary and heavy-laden? Jesus invites you to come to Him for rest (Matthew 11:28). Our God is a God of all comfort! He comforts us in our affliction so that we may comfort others (2 Corinthians 1:3-4).

Have you noticed that sometimes when you feel down God brings you comfort and strength through others? It is also true that God can use you to bring comfort to others in their times of need.

Take a moment and thank God for the strength gives us each day to meet the challenges of life. Thank God for the people around you who come to you in times of need. Pray that God will use you to bring comfort and strength to your friends and relatives when they need you.

Prayer: O Lord, thank You for renewing our strength so that we can mount up with wings like eagles. Give us grace to bring the comfort of the Gospel to those around us need comfort, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Friday

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

Verse of the Day: Mark 1:39

- L** Alleluia. Jesus went throughout all Galilee, preaching in their synagogues.
C and casting out demons. Alleluia. 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 Corinthians 9:16–27

¹⁶For if I preach the gospel, that gives me no ground for boasting. For necessity is laid upon me. Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel! ¹⁷For if I do this of my own will, I have a reward, but not of my own will, I am still entrusted with a stewardship. ¹⁸What then is my reward? That in my preaching I may present the gospel free of charge, so as not to make full use of my right in the gospel.

¹⁹For though I am free from all, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win more of them. ²⁰To the Jews I became as a Jew, in order to win Jews. To those under the law I became as one under the law (though not being myself under the law) that I might win those under the law. ²¹To those outside the law I became as one outside the law (not being outside the law of God but under the law of Christ) that I might win those outside the law. ²²To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all people, that by all means I might save some. ²³I do it all for the sake of the gospel, that I may share with them in its blessings.

²⁴Do you not know that in a race all the runners compete, but only one receives the prize? So run that you may obtain it. ²⁵Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. ²⁶So I do not run aimlessly; I do not box as one beating the air. ²⁷But I discipline my body and keep it under control, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified.

And I'd wait a million years
Walk a million miles, cry a million tears
I'd swim the deepest sea
Climb the highest hill, just to have you near me²

This is the refrain from a 1969 hit single by The Grass Roots. I graduated from high school in 1969 so this song is straight from my formative years. I still hear it played on the radio from time to time.

These words proclaim the intense romantic love often expressed in pop songs of every generation. However, they jumped into my mind as I read the epistle lesson for today.

The Apostle Paul explains that he became a Jew to win Jews. He became one under the law to win those under the law. To those outside the law, he became as one outside the law. To the weak, he became weak. In

² I'd Wait a Million Years, by Gary Zekley and Mitchell Bottler recorded by The Grass Roots, ABC/Dunhill, 1969.

fact, he became all things to all people that by all means, he might save some. Paul, too, has an intense love. Yet his is not a romantic love. It is what the Greek language calls “agape” love. It is a self-sacrificing love.

Paul not only said that he would go to any extreme to save some but he did. He may not have walked a million miles but he walked for hundreds and possibly thousands of miles on his missionary journeys. He was falsely imprisoned, beaten, ridiculed, abused, and shipwrecked because of his love for the lost. He did it all to save some!

You and I know the love of God in Christ Jesus. We have received forgiveness, life, and salvation through faith in Jesus and His atoning death on the cross. We are surrounded by many who are in the dark and lost without Christ.

We may not be able to walk a million miles, swim the deepest sea, or climb the highest mountain to save some. But we can tell the love of Jesus. We can say He died for all.

Prayer: O Lord, grant to us and Your Church the missionary fervor of the Apostle Paul. Amen.

Saturday

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

C Amen.

Gradual Psalm 117:1–2a; 96:8

L Praise the LORD, all nations!

C Extol him, all peoples!

L For great is his steadfast love toward us,

C and the faithfulness of the LORD endures forever.

L Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name;

C bring an offering, and come into his courts!

Verse of the Day: Mark 1:39

L Alleluia. Jesus went throughout all Galilee, preaching in their synagogues.

C and casting out demons. Alleluia. 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.

It is not common to talk about demons, devils, and evil today except in American politics. Jesus often encounters demons in the New Testament and He is always victorious in these encounters.

As a reminder, here are a few facts from the Catechism about demons and devils:

Some angels rebelled against God. They are the devils or demons.

The evil angels are also many and powerful. They hate God and seek to destroy everything that is good, especially faith in Christ.³

[Part of the answer to Question 100. What else does the Bible tell us about angels?]

³Martin Luther, *Luther's Small Catechism With Explanation*, Contains the basic principles of the Lutheran religion with some explanation.; Translation of: *Kleine Katechismus - English.*, electronic ed., 3 (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1997, c1986).

The Devil is the enemy of God. He is also the enemy of God's people. He tries to undermine God's work at every turn. But no matter how he tries, the Devil will never succeed in his struggle with God.

Martin Luther reminds us of this in stanza three of A Mighty Fortress is our God:

Though devils all the world should fill,
All eager to devour us,
We tremble not, we fear no ill;
They shall not overpow'r us.
This world's prince may still
Scowl fierce as he will,
He can harm us none.
He's judged; the deed is done;
One little word can fell him.

Jesus totally defeated the Devil and all the demons on the cross. He cannot hold sway over us. Jesus continues to cast out demons today when people turn from the world of darkness to Him in faith. May we never fear the scowling of the devil, "One little word can fell him!"

Prayer: O Lord, let us never forget that in Jesus "Our vict'ry has been won; The Kingdom ours remaineth." Amen.

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