

The Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost

September 5, 2021

Son of God, Eternal Savior Lutheran Service Book 842, Lutheran Worship 394, The Lutheran Hymnal n/a



1 Son of God, e - ter - nal Sav - ior, Source of life and
2 As You, Lord, have lived for oth - ers, So may we for
3 Come, O Christ, and reign a - mong us, King of love and
4 Son of God, e - ter - nal Sav - ior, Source of life and



truth and grace, Word made flesh, whose birth a - mong us
oth - ers live. Free - ly have Your gifts been grant - ed;
Prince of Peace; Hush the storm of strife and pas - sion,
truth and grace, Word made flesh, whose birth a - mong us



Hal - lows all our hu - man race, You our Head, who, throned in
Free-ly may Your ser - vants give. Yours the gold and Yours the
Bid its cru - el dis - cords cease. By Your pa - tient years of
Hal - lows all our hu - man race: By Your pray - ing, by Your



glo - ry, For Your own will ev - er plead: Fill us with Your
sil - ver, Yours the wealth of land and sea; We but stew - ards
toil - ing, By Your si - lent hours of pain, Quench our fe - vered
will - ing That Your peo - ple should be one, Grant, O grant our



love and pit - y, Heal our wrongs, and help our need.
of Your boun - ty Held in sol - emn trust will be.
thirst of plea - sure, Stem our self - ish greed of gain.
hope's fru - i - tion: Here on earth Your will be done.

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 28:1–2, 6–7; antiphon Psalm 28:8

L The Lord is the strength of his people;
he is the saving refuge of his anointed.

C To you, O Lord, I call; my rock, be not deaf to me,
lest, if you be silent to me, I become like those who go down to the pit.

L Hear the voice of my pleas for mercy, when I cry to you for help,
when I lift up my hands toward your most holy sanctuary.

C Blessèd be the Lord!
for he has heard the voice of my pleas for mercy.

L The Lord is my strength and my shield; in him my heart trusts, and I am helped;
my heart exults, and with my song I give thanks to him.

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 The Lord is the strength of his people;
he is the saving refuge of his anointed.

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, let Your merciful ears be open to the prayers of Your humble servants and grant that what they ask may be in accord with Your gracious will; 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 35:4–7a

⁴Say to those who have an anxious heart,
“Be strong; fear not!
Behold, your God
will come with vengeance,
with the recompense of God.
He will come and save you.”

⁵Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,
and the ears of the deaf unstopped;
⁶then shall the lame man leap like a deer,
and the tongue of the mute sing for joy.
For waters break forth in the wilderness,
and streams in the desert;
⁷the burning sand shall become a pool,
and the thirsty ground springs of water.

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

Gradual Psalm 34:9, 19, alt.

L Fear the Lord, you his saints,
C for those who fear him lack nothing!
L Many are the afflictions of the righteous,
C but the Lord delivers him out of them all.

Psalms 146

L ¹ Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord, O my soul!
C ² I will praise the Lord as long as I live; I will sing praises to my God while I have my being.
L ³ Put not your trust in princes, in a son of man, in whom there is no salvation.
C ⁴ When his breath departs he returns to the earth; on that very day his plans perish.
L ⁵ Blessed is he whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope is in the Lord his God,
C ⁶ who made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, who keeps faith forever;
L ⁷ who executes justice for the oppressed, who gives food to the hungry. The Lord sets the prisoners free;
C ⁸ the Lord opens the eyes of the blind.
The Lord lifts up those who are bowed down; the Lord loves the righteous.

- L** ⁹ The Lord watches over the sojourners;
he upholds the widow and the fatherless, but the way of the wicked he brings to ruin.
- C** ¹⁰ **The Lord will reign forever, your God, O Zion, to all generations.**
Praise the Lord!

James 2:1–10, 14–18

¹My brothers, show no partiality as you hold the faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory. ²For if a man wearing a gold ring and fine clothing comes into your assembly, and a poor man in shabby clothing also comes in, ³and if you pay attention to the one who wears the fine clothing and say, “You sit here in a good place,” while you say to the poor man, “You stand over there,” or, “Sit down at my feet,” ⁴have you not then made distinctions among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts? ⁵Listen, my beloved brothers, has not God chosen those who are poor in the world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom, which he has promised to those who love him? ⁶But you have dishonored the poor man. Are not the rich the ones who oppress you, and the ones who drag you into court? ⁷Are they not the ones who blaspheme the honorable name by which you were called?

⁸If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself,” you are doing well. ⁹But if you show partiality, you are committing sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors. ¹⁰For whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become accountable for all of it.

¹⁴What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him? ¹⁵If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, ¹⁶and one of you says to them, “Go in peace, be warmed and filled,” without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that? ¹⁷So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.

¹⁸But someone will say, “You have faith and I have works.” Show me your faith apart from your works, and I will show you my faith by my works.

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

Verse of the Day: Psalm 147:2–3

- L** Alleluia, Alleluia. The LORD builds up Jerusalem; He gathers the outcasts of Israel. Alleluia.
- C** **Alleluia, Alleluia. He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds. Alleluia.**

Mark 7:24–37

- L** The Holy Gospel according to St. Mark, the 7th chapter.
- C** **Glory to You, O Lord.**

²⁴From there [Jesus] arose and went away to the region of Tyre and Sidon. And he entered a house and did not want anyone to know, yet he could not be hidden. ²⁵But immediately a woman whose little daughter was possessed by an unclean spirit heard of him and came and fell down at his feet. ²⁶Now the woman was a Gentile, a Syrophenician by birth. And she begged him to cast the demon out of her daughter. ²⁷And he said to her, “Let the children be fed first, for it is not right to take the children’s bread and throw it to the dogs.” ²⁸But she answered him, “Yes, Lord; yet even the dogs under the table eat the children’s crumbs.” ²⁹And he said to her, “For this statement you may go your way; the demon has left your daughter.” ³⁰And she went home and found the child lying in bed and the demon gone.

³¹Then [Jesus] returned from the region of Tyre and went through Sidon to the Sea of Galilee, in the region of the Decapolis. ³²And they brought to him a man who was deaf and had a speech impediment, and they begged him to lay his hand on him. ³³And taking him aside from the crowd privately, he put his fingers into his ears, and after spitting touched his tongue. ³⁴And looking up to heaven, he sighed and said to him, “Ephphatha,” that is, “Be opened.” ³⁵And his ears were opened, his tongue was released, and he spoke plainly. ³⁶And Jesus

charged them to tell no one. But the more he charged them, the more zealously they proclaimed it. ³⁷ And they were astonished beyond measure, saying, "He has done all things well. He even makes the deaf hear and the mute speak."

L This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C Praise to You, O Christ.

C I believe in God, the Father Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth.

and sits at the right hand of God the Father
Almighty.

From thence He will come to judge the living
and the dead.

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

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.

Praise the Almighty Lutheran Service Book 797, Lutheran Worship 445, The Lutheran Hymnal 26



1 Praise the Al - might - y, my soul, a - dore Him!
2 Trust not in rul - ers; they are but mor - tal;
3 Bless - ed, oh, bless - ed are they for - ev - er
4 Pen - i - tent sin - ners, for mer - cy cry - ing,



Yes, I will laud Him un - til death; With songs and
Earth - born they are and soon de - cay. Vain are their
Whose help is from the Lord Most High, Whom from sal -
Par - don and peace from Him ob - tain; Ev - er the



an - thems I come be - fore Him As long as
coun - sels at life's last por - tal, When the dark
va - tion can noth - ing sev - er, And who in
wants of the poor sup - ply - ing, Their faith - ful



He al - lows me breath. From Him my life and
grave en - gulfed its prey. Since mor - tals can no
hope to Christ draw nigh. To all who trust in
God He will re - main. He helps His chil - dren



all things came; Bless, O my soul, His ho - ly name.
help af - ford, Place all your trust in Christ, our Lord.
Him, our Lord Will aid and coun - sel now af - ford.
in dis - tress, The wid - ows and the fa - ther - less.



Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia!
Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia!
Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia!
Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia!

- 5 Praise, all you people, the name so holy
Of Him who does such wondrous things!
All that has being, to praise Him solely,
With happy heart its amen sings.
Children of God, with angel host
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost!
Alleluia, alleluia!

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Devotional Thoughts:

From the time of my very first memories, we always had a pet dog in our home. My dad had a soft spot in his heart for each one of them.

On one very cold night, we heard whimpering under the floor in our living room. Our almost one-hundred-year-old house did not have a basement but only a crawl space. What were we to do?

It had been apparent for several days that our pet dog would soon be a mother. Now she had delivered in a most inconvenient place and at a most inconvenient time. It's funny how things seem to work out that way when it comes to babies.

So there was only one thing to do. My dad and mom rolled up the carpet. Then my dad pried up the floorboards and gently lifted this new mother and her pups into the warmth of our living room.

This little episode came to mind as I considered Jesus' encounter with the Syrophenician woman. Let's set the scene.

You may not have realized it but Mark was getting us ready for this meeting already in our Gospel lessons for the last two weeks! It all began with the issue of disciples who neglected to wash their hands before they ate. The Pharisees were appalled at such ill-mannered and irreligious behavior! In fact, they insisted upon elaborate rituals of washing not only hands but also cups, pots, copper vessels, and dining couches. They had elevated

their traditions to the level of doctrine! They considered it to be sinful to not follow their practice of ritual cleansing.

Jesus chided them for their hypocrisy. They honored God with their lips but their hearts were far from Him.

Jesus then called the people together and explained to them that it is not what a person eats that defiles him. Here, Mark parenthetically explains, “(Thus he declared all foods clean.)” Rather, it is what comes out of a sinful heart that makes a person unclean such as evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, coveting, wickedness, deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride, foolishness.

Next, Jesus left the shores of the Sea of Galilee and traveled to a place where people didn’t wash their hands before they ate and had a diet of ritually unclean foods. Here, He was surrounded by gentiles!

(Tyre is located more than 30 miles as the crow flies from Capernaum on the shore of the Mediterranean Sea in what is now southern Lebanon. Sidon is about 20 miles farther up the coast.)

Although Jesus was seeking some privacy, His reputation preceded Him. Soon a young mother in distress for her little daughter learned of Jesus’ visit. Without delay, she came and fell at His feet begging for help.

Who did this woman think she was, coming to Jesus like that? She was a gentile, a Greek-speaking Syrophenician. The Pharisees had been upset that Jesus’ disciples ate with unwashed hands. Now it is time for the disciples to be upset that this “unclean” gentile woman would come so presumptuously to the Messiah of the Jewish nation to seek a favor.

As though He is reading the minds of the disciples, Jesus speaks out loud what they must have been thinking. “Let the children be fed first, for it is not right to take the children’s bread and throw it to the dogs.” (Matthew tells us that the disciples pleaded with Him to send her away.)

From a distance, we can see what the disciples had missed. They sought the freedom to live like gentiles by not washing their hands according to the tradition of the Pharisees, but now when a real live gentile appears, they want nothing to do with her.

We face the same dangerous way of thinking today. We demand our own freedoms and privileges but are quick to refuse them to others. We excuse our own failings but criticize others for their shortcomings. We see this double standard all around us. It’s particularly apparent in the current political divide in our country. From news reporters to casual conversations over coffee, it’s always the other side that falls short. While we can expect that in our secular world, it is particularly heartbreaking when we witness it in our churches and our families.

The Bible does not report anything about this woman’s lifestyle. We don’t know her social standing or her ethics. But we do know her faith! It quickly becomes evident by how she responded to Jesus’ words.

Although her status as a gentile was likened to the status of a dog in a family of loved children, she is not deterred. Without delay, she seized upon this lowly status and answered, “Yes, Lord; yet even the dogs under the table eat the children’s crumbs.” While the disciples would go on to argue about who was the greatest in the kingdom of God, this woman knew that she would be content with crumbs from the table.

My dad was the first one up in the house. He had to travel a long way to work and was always the first to arrive. Every morning, dad sat alone at the breakfast table except for our little dog begging at his feet. Our pooch was not disappointed. Dad made toast as part of his breakfast and never failed to share a few bites with our pup. I wonder if this Syrophenician mother had a father like mine.

Had Jesus traveled all the way to Tyre just to have an encounter with this woman? We don’t know. Scripture records no other activity there before Jesus returned to the Sea of Galilee. It may well be that Jesus had come all this way in order to share the crumbs of life with a woman and her daughter. Such is His love.

There may be times when you feel unloved or unimportant. The people around you may show you little compassion and treat you the way the disciples treated the Syrophenician woman. But God in His mercy always cares.

We are welcomed to the Lord’s Table, not as dogs, but as children of the heavenly Father. He doesn’t just give us crumbs but the Bread of Life, Jesus Himself. We know what the disciples had not yet learned, as St. Paul declares, “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus” (Galatians 3:28).

Since God has welcomed us in Christ, may we also be quick to welcome others into the household of faith. “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).

“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.

- L** Almighty God, we ask You to calm our anxious hearts. Give us confidence in Your love for us and Your power to make the blind see and the lame leap like a deer. Grant to us the water of life as we make our way through the difficulties of life, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

C Amen.

- L** Compassionate God, give us hearts that show no partiality as we relate to our brothers and sisters in Christ. Move us to compassion as we see the poor and hungry around us that we may help supply their needs in times of want.

C Amen.

- L** Heavenly Father, we come to You as beggars. Thank You for providing us with so much more than the crumbs that fall from Your table. Thank You for the gift of Your only-begotten Son and the gift of eternal life that He grants to all who believe.

C Amen.

- L** God of all knowledge and wisdom, continue to bless all students and teachers, parents and grandparents. As we struggle to control the spread of this deadly disease, preserve our schools from strife. Grant that we may each bear each other’s burdens with compassion and care.

C Amen.

- L** Almighty God, send Your holy angels to watch over all of our loved ones, especially those who live in distant places. We thank You for the protection granted to all who have attended to our needs during the pandemic. As we again experience an increase in infections, we ask for Your continued protection and grace.

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.



1 Je - sus shall reign wher - e'er the sun Does its suc -
2 To Him shall end - less prayer be made, And end - less
3 Peo - ple and realms of ev - 'ry tongue Dwell on His
4 Bless - ings a - bound wher - e'er He reigns: The pris - 'ners
5 Let ev - 'ry crea - ture rise and bring Hon - ors pe -



ces - sive jour - neys run; His king - dom stretch from
prais - es crown His head; His name like sweet per -
love with sweet - est song; And in - fant voic - es
leap, un - loose their chains, The wea - ry find e -
cu - liar to our King; An - gels de - scend with



shore to shore Till moons shall wax and wane no more.
fume shall rise With ev - 'ry morn - ing sac - ri - fice.
shall pro - claim Their ear - ly bless - ings on His name.
ter - nal rest, And all who suf - fer want are blest.
songs a - gain, And earth re - peat the loud a - men.

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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 Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost

September 6– September 11, 2021

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.

Introit Psalm 28:1–2, 6–7; antiphon Psalm 28:8

- L** The Lord is the strength of his people;
he is the saving refuge of his anointed.
C To you, O Lord, I call; my rock, be not deaf to me,
lest, if you be silent to me, I become like those who go down to the pit.
L Hear the voice of my pleas for mercy, when I cry to you for help,
when I lift up my hands toward your most holy sanctuary.
C Blessed be the Lord!
for he has heard the voice of my pleas for mercy.
L The Lord is my strength and my shield; in him my heart trusts, and I am helped;
my heart exults, and with my song I give thanks to him.
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 The Lord is the strength of his people;
he is the saving refuge of his anointed.

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. |

Are you a NASCAR fan? Maybe not. For many years, I only had a nodding acquaintance with this motorsport. However, my son loved racing. NASCAR, Formula 1, Indy...you name it. Since NASCAR was on television every week, I decided to watch it with my son. Watching cars endlessly drive around an oval, hour after hour, was not very entertaining. When I mentioned this to my son, he responded, "Dad, you have to pick a driver!" I did. I chose Mark Martin because we had something in common. We were both coming to the end of our careers. I like to see an old guy compete with the youngsters. After that, every race was captivating as I watched Mark Martin make his move, get crashed out, or occasionally win!

The introit for this week moved me to make a similar suggestion regarding the psalms. There are 150 of them. How do you get familiar with them? You could read through them one after another. In doing that, it may be that after a while they all tend to blend together like NASCAR drivers racing in a circle. Here's my suggestion. Find a few favorites and stick with them for a while. Most of us love Psalm 23. After that, is there another one that you like? Psalm 100 fills that role for many. I also like Psalms 32 & 51.

For a long time now, Psalm 27 has been one of my favorites. I have read it many, many times standing next to a hospital bed. After a while, I began to notice its neighbor, Psalm 28. Verses from Psalm 28 serve as our introit this week.

Psalm 28 is an excellent psalm to get to know. In verse 2, David begs God to hear his prayer. Like David, we may sometimes believe that God isn't listening to our prayers. But by verse 6, David exclaims, "Blessed be the LORD! For he has heard the voice of my pleas for mercy."

Psalm 28 can become your friend once you get acquainted. It ends with this excellent prayer, "Oh, save your people and bless your heritage! Be their shepherd and carry them forever" (Psalm 28:9).

L Let us pray. O Lord, You are my strength and my shield. My heart trusts in You and I am helped. My hearts sings for joy in thanksgiving for all of my prayers that You have graciously answered, through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

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: Psalm 147:2-3

L Alleluia, Alleluia. The LORD builds up Jerusalem; He gathers the outcasts of Israel. Alleluia.

C Alleluia, Alleluia. He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds. 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 Lord, let Your merciful ears be open to the prayers of Your humble servants and grant that what they ask may be in accord with Your gracious will; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

By now, you may have noticed that prayer is one of the themes for this week. In our Gospel lesson, there are two accounts of intercessory prayer. The first is the Syrophenician woman praying to Jesus on behalf of her little daughter. The second is the prayer offered on behalf of a deaf man. Yesterday, we considered David's psalm on the efficacy of prayer.

Our collect this week, echoes David's words, "Hear the voice of my pleas for mercy, when I cry to you for help" (Psalm 28:2). We come to the Lord in the spirit of humility displayed by the Syrophoenician woman. We seek God's help in faith with meekness.

And God always answers. His answers are always in accord with His gracious will for us. His gracious will is that we would spend eternity with Him because of the sacrifice made by Jesus on the cross.

We are not always aware of His temporal will for us. He may or may not want you to have a bright red Mustang. But we know that He will always answer our requests for earthly blessings in a way that is ultimately best for us and our eternal salvation.

Let us pray: O Lord, let Your merciful ears be open to the prayers of Your humble servants and grant that what they ask may be in accord with Your gracious will; 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: Psalm 147:2–3

- L** Alleluia, Alleluia. The LORD builds up Jerusalem; He gathers the outcasts of Israel. Alleluia.
C Alleluia, Alleluia. He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds. Alleluia.

Psalm 146

- L** ¹ Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord, O my soul!
C ² **I will praise the Lord as long as I live; I will sing praises to my God while I have my being.**
L ³ Put not your trust in princes, in a son of man, in whom there is no salvation.
C ⁴ **When his breath departs he returns to the earth; on that very day his plans perish.**
L ⁵ Blessed is he whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope is in the Lord his God,
C ⁶ **who made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, who keeps faith forever;**
L ⁷ who executes justice for the oppressed, who gives food to the hungry. The Lord sets the prisoners free;
C ⁸ **the Lord opens the eyes of the blind.**
The Lord lifts up those who are bowed down; the Lord loves the righteous.
L ⁹ The Lord watches over the sojourners;
he upholds the widow and the fatherless, but the way of the wicked he brings to ruin.
C ¹⁰ **The Lord will reign forever, your God, O Zion, to all generations.**
Praise the Lord!

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 146 is the first of the five "Hallelujah Psalms" that end the Book of Psalms. This is a wonderful psalm to use when God answers our prayers.

We don't know if the Syrophoenician woman or the man healed of deafness knew this psalm but read through it picturing the miraculous recoveries witnessed and experienced by these two people. Now read through it again as you contemplate all of the blessings that God has showered upon you in your life.

Tennessee Ernie Ford is a now mostly forgotten singer and television personality. He was successful in country and western, pop, and gospel music. Possibly his most well-known song is "Sixteen Tons." Because of

his success, my parents purchased his album of hymns. It turns out that his album of “loved hymns” had very few hymns that I recognized. One of his “new to me” hymns on the album that I have never forgotten was “Count Your Blessings.” Its refrain begins:

Count your blessings, name them one by one,
Count your blessings, see what God has done!

Some of the blessings God showers upon us are easy to count. Others we don’t recognize until many years have passed. Some we may never be aware of.

The greatest blessing of all is the gift of our Savior, the gift of forgiveness, eternal life, and salvation. Reread this “Hallelujah Psalm” again remembering these great blessings.

Prayer: Almighty God, open the eyes of my blind heart that I may see how You have watched over me throughout my life. Grant me the grace to praise You for the gift of faith in my savior, Jesus, in His name. Amen.

Thursday

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

Verse of the Day: Psalm 147:2–3

L Alleluia, Alleluia. The LORD builds up Jerusalem; He gathers the outcasts of Israel. Alleluia.
C Alleluia, Alleluia. He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds. 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.

Isaiah 35:4–7a

⁴Say to those who have an anxious heart,
“Be strong; fear not!
Behold, your God
will come with vengeance,
with the recompense of God.
He will come and save you.”

⁵Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,
and the ears of the deaf unstopped;
⁶then shall the lame man leap like a deer,
and the tongue of the mute sing for joy.
For waters break forth in the wilderness,
and streams in the desert;
⁷the burning sand shall become a pool,
and the thirsty ground springs of water.

The Old Testament lesson this week from Isaiah 35 continues to speak to us today. We hear these marvelous words, “Say to those who have an anxious heart, ‘Be strong; fear not!’”

Who among us hasn’t had an anxious heart? We may have our own personal struggles as the deaf man in our Gospel lesson. Or we may have anxiety for a loved one who is suffering as the woman who asked Jesus to heal her little daughter.

Nervousness, distress, and dread flow over us when life is out of control. Worry becomes overwhelming when we see disaster on the horizon but can find no way to avoid it. Impending danger may cause us to lose sleep, lose our appetites, or even tremble with fear.

This is when God comes to us and says, “Be strong; fear not!” Why? Because “He will come and save you.”

God saves us every day. He often saves us from calamities that we are not even aware of. He saves us by giving us food, and drink, clothing, a place to live, etc. He saves us by healing us from all sorts of illnesses.

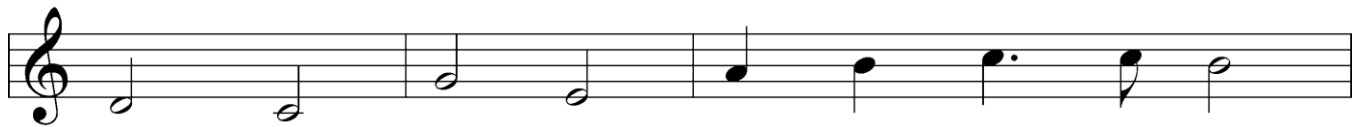
But we look forward to the ultimate salvation that is ours in heaven. All that we have and cherish here on earth is temporary. What God gives us in paradise is eternal.

One day, He will call us and all believers to be with Him where “He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. 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.” (Revelation 21:3-4).

Jesus Christ, My Sure Defense Lutheran Service Book 741, Lutheran Worship 266, The Lutheran Hymnal 206
Stanzas 1-4



1 Je - sus Christ, my sure de - fense And my Sav - ior, now is
2 Je - sus, my Re - deem - er, lives; Like - wise I to life shall
3 No, too close - ly I am bound By my hope to Christ for -
4 I am flesh and must re - turn To the dust, whence I am



liv - ing! Know - ing this, my con - fi - dence
wak - en. He will bring me where He is;
ev - er; Faith's strong hand the Rock has found,
tak - en; But by faith I now dis - cern



Rests up - on the hope here giv - en, Though the
Shall my cour - age then be shak - en? Shall I
Grasped it, and will leave it nev - er; E - ven
That from death I shall a - wak - en With my



night of death be fraught Still with man - y an anx - ious thought.
fear, or could the Head Rise and leave His mem - bers dead?
death now can - not part From its Lord the trust - ing heart.
Sav - ior to a - bide In His glo - ry, at His side.

Prayer: Lord Jesus Christ, You commanded the wind and the waves, and they obeyed You. Speak peace into our ears when we are troubled by fear. By the power of Your Word, calm our anxious hearts and the raging storms of our spirits; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Friday

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

C Amen.

Verse of the Day: Psalm 147:2–3

L Alleluia, Alleluia. The LORD builds up Jerusalem; He gathers the outcasts of Israel. Alleluia.

C Alleluia, Alleluia. He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds. 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.

James 2:1–10, 14–18

¹My brothers, show no partiality as you hold the faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory. ²For if a man wearing a gold ring and fine clothing comes into your assembly, and a poor man in shabby clothing also comes in, ³and if you pay attention to the one who wears the fine clothing and say, “You sit here in a good place,” while you say to the poor man, “You stand over there,” or, “Sit down at my feet,” ⁴have you not then made distinctions among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts? ⁵Listen, my beloved brothers, has not God chosen those who are poor in the world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom, which he has promised to those who love him? ⁶But you have dishonored the poor man. Are not the rich the ones who oppress you, and the ones who drag you into court? ⁷Are they not the ones who blaspheme the honorable name by which you were called?

⁸If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself,” you are doing well. ⁹But if you show partiality, you are committing sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors. ¹⁰For whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become accountable for all of it.

¹⁴What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him? ¹⁵If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, ¹⁶and one of you says to them, “Go in peace, be warmed and filled,” without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that? ¹⁷So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.

¹⁸But someone will say, “You have faith and I have works.” Show me your faith apart from your works, and I will show you my faith by my works.

I have long admired the early church for its generosity, kindness, and faithfulness. Acts 2:44-47 describes the activities of these first Christians following the day of Pentecost, “And all who believed were together and had all things in common. And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.”

I remember coming home from college and telling my pastor how sad it is that the church of today isn't like this. I don't think that I am alone. People both inside and outside the church are disappointed to learn of the unwholesomeness displayed by those who call themselves Christians.

My pastor paused and looked at me and responded, “Phil, the early church had their problems too.” Indeed, you don’t have to read much farther in Acts to discover a dispute in the church that developed over the care of widows. The epistles abound in passages chiding the early Christians for their failings and directing them in righteous living.

This shouldn’t be a surprise. We all continue to sin. We all continue to need forgiveness and a savior every day.

Our reading from James points out an area of ongoing difficulty for us in the church. We still tend to be influenced by the rich and powerful. We still tend to neglect the poor. May we heed James’ admonition, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”

Prayer: Almighty God, grant Your Church the grace to deal in generosity and love with all who are poor and distressed and to plead the cause of those who have no helper, especially those tossed by tempests of doubt or grief. We ask this for the sake of Him who gave His life for us, Your Son, our Savior, Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Saturday

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

C Amen.

Gradual Psalm 34:9, 19, alt.

L Fear the Lord, you his saints,

C **for those who fear him lack nothing!**

L Many are the afflictions of the righteous,

C **but the Lord delivers him out of them all.**

Verse of the Day: Psalm 147:2–3

L Alleluia, Alleluia. The LORD builds up Jerusalem; He gathers the outcasts of Israel. Alleluia.

C **Alleluia, Alleluia. He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds. 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.**

Mark 7:31–37

³¹Then [Jesus] returned from the region of Tyre and went through Sidon to the Sea of Galilee, in the region of the Decapolis. ³²And they brought to him a man who was deaf and had a speech impediment, and they begged him to lay his hand on him. ³³And taking him aside from the crowd privately, he put his fingers into his ears, and after spitting touched his tongue. ³⁴And looking up to heaven, he sighed and said to him, “Ephphatha,” that is, “Be opened.” ³⁵And his ears were opened, his tongue was released, and he spoke plainly. ³⁶And Jesus charged them to tell no one. But the more he charged them, the more zealously they proclaimed it. ³⁷And they were astonished beyond measure, saying, “He has done all things well. He even makes the deaf hear and the mute speak.”

In Our Gospel lesson, Jesus first traveled to the gentile region of Tyre and Sidon. There He granted healing to the little daughter of the Syrophenician woman. Next, He traveled to the region of the Decapolis east and

south of the Sea of Galilee, another gentile area. Here Jesus healed a deaf man. To this, the people exclaim, “He has done all things well. He even makes the deaf hear and the mute speak!”

Indeed this is a true and accurate observation of Jesus’ activities. But it is more than that. The people knew that when the Messiah would come, He would make the deaf hear and the mute speak. Isaiah had prophesied:

⁵Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,
and the ears of the deaf unstopped;
⁶then shall the lame man leap like a deer,
and the tongue of the mute sing for joy.
For waters break forth in the wilderness,
and streams in the desert;
⁷the burning sand shall become a pool,
and the thirsty ground springs of water. (Isaiah 35:5-7a)

Jesus performed miracles because of His love and compassion. He also did this to confirm for the people His identity as the long-awaited Messiah, the Christ.

The people should have known that when the Messiah came, He would save them, not only from diseases and infirmities but also from sin and eternal death. He did this when He died on the cross.

We thank God that we live in the time of knowing our Savior who does all things well. He continues to heal us today. But we know that the perfect healing of body and soul awaits us in the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, grant us repentance to weep over our sins and then rejoice in the forgiveness that You won for us on the cross. Move us to celebrate that in You the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have Good News preached to them; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

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