

The Twenty-second Sunday after Pentecost

October 24, 2021

God, Whose Almighty Word Lutheran Service Book 979, Lutheran Worship 317, The Lutheran Hymnal 508



1 God, whose al - might - y word Cha - os and
2 Lord, who once came to bring, On Your re -
3 Spir - it of truth and love, Life - giv - ing,
4 Ho - ly and bless - ed Three, Glo - ri - ous



dark - ness heard And took their flight: Hear us, we
deem - ing wing, Heal - ing and sight, Health to the
ho - ly dove, Speed forth Your flight; Move on the
Trin - i - ty, Wis - dom, love, might! Bound - less as



hum - bly pray, And where the Gos - pel day
sick in mind, Sight to the in - ly blind:
wa - ter's face, Bear - ing the lamp of grace,
o - cean's tide, Roll - ing in full - est pride,



Sheds not its glo - rious ray, Let there be light!
Oh, now to hu - man-kind Let there be light!
And in earth's dark - est place Let there be light!
Through the earth, far and wide, Let there be light!

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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 131; antiphon Psalm 130:1–2

L Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord!

O Lord, hear my voice! Let your ears be attentive to the voice of my pleas for mercy!

C **O Lord, my heart is not lifted up; my eyes are not raised too high;
I do not occupy myself with things too great and too marvelous for me.**

L But I have calmed and quieted my soul, like a weaned child with its mother;
like a weaned child is my soul within me.

C **O Israel, hope in the Lord
from this time forth and forevermore.**

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 Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord!

O Lord, hear my voice! Let your ears be attentive to the voice of my pleas for mercy!

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 helper of all who call on You, have mercy on us and give us eyes of faith to see Your Son that we may follow Him on the way that leads to eternal life; through the same Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C **Amen.**

Jeremiah 31:7–9

⁷ Thus says the LORD:

“Sing aloud with gladness for Jacob,
and raise shouts for the chief of the nations;
proclaim, give praise, and say,
‘O LORD, save your people,
the remnant of Israel.’

⁸ Behold, I will bring them from the north country
and gather them from the farthest parts of the earth,
among them the blind and the lame,
the pregnant woman and she who is in labor, together;
a great company, they shall return here.

⁹ With weeping they shall come,
and with pleas for mercy I will lead them back,
I will make them walk by brooks of water,
in a straight path in which they shall not stumble,
for I am a father to Israel,
and Ephraim is my firstborn.

L This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

Gradual Psalm 91:11; 103:1

L He will command his angels concerning you

C to guard you in all your ways.

L Bless the Lord, O my soul,

C and all that is within me, bless his holy name!

Psalm 126

L ¹ When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion, we were like those who dream.

C ² Then our mouth was filled with laughter, and our tongue with shouts of joy;
then they said among the nations, “The Lord has done great things for them.”

L ³ The Lord has done great things for us; we are glad.

C ⁴ Restore our fortunes, O Lord, like streams in the Negeb!

L ⁵ Those who sow in tears shall reap with shouts of joy!

C ⁶ He who goes out weeping, bearing the seed for sowing,
shall come home with shouts of joy, bringing his sheaves with him.

Hebrews 7:23–28

²³ The former priests were many in number, because they were prevented by death from continuing in office,
²⁴ but he holds his priesthood permanently, because he continues forever. ²⁵ Consequently, he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them.

²⁶ For it was indeed fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, innocent, unstained, separated from sinners, and exalted above the heavens. ²⁷ He has no need, like those high priests, to offer sacrifices daily, first for his own sins and then for those of the people, since he did this once for all when he offered up himself. ²⁸ For the law appoints men in their weakness as high priests, but the word of the oath, which came later than the law, appoints a Son who has been made perfect forever.

L This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

Verse of the Day: Hebrews 12:2a

L Alleluia, Alleluia. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, Alleluia.

C Alleluia, Alleluia. The founder and perfecter of our faith. Alleluia.

Mark 10:46–52

L The Holy Gospel according to St. Mark, the 10th chapter.

C Glory to You, O Lord.

⁴⁶And they came to Jericho. And as he was leaving Jericho with his disciples and a great crowd, Bartimaeus, a blind beggar, the son of Timaeus, was sitting by the roadside. ⁴⁷And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out and say, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!” ⁴⁸And many rebuked him, telling him to be silent. But he cried out all the more, “Son of David, have mercy on me!” ⁴⁹And Jesus stopped and said, “Call him.” And they called the blind man, saying to him, “Take heart. Get up; he is calling you.” ⁵⁰And throwing off his cloak, he sprang up and came to Jesus. ⁵¹And Jesus said to him, “What do you want me to do for you?” And the blind man said to him, “Rabbi, let me recover my sight.” ⁵²And Jesus said to him, “Go your way; your faith has made you well.” And immediately he recovered his sight and followed him on the way.

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 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.



1 Just as I am, with - out one plea But that Thy
 2 Just as I am and wait - ing not To rid my
 3 Just as I am, though tossed a - bout With man - y a
 4 Just as I am, poor, wretch - ed, blind; Sight, rich - es,



blood was shed for me And that Thou bidd'st me come to
 soul of one dark blot, To Thee, whose blood can cleanse each
 con - flict, man - y a doubt, Fight - ings and fears with - in, with -
 heal - ing of the mind, Yea, all I need, in Thee to



Thee, O Lamb of God, I come, I come.
 spot, O Lamb of God, I come, I come.
 out, O Lamb of God, I come, I come.
 find, O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

5 Just as I am, Thou wilt receive,
 Wilt welcome, pardon, cleanse, relieve;
 Because Thy promise I believe,
 O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

6 Just as I am; Thy love unknown
 Has broken ev'ry barrier down;
 Now to be Thine, yea, Thine alone,
 O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

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Devotional Thoughts:

Joshua fought the battle of Jericho
 Jericho, Jericho
 Joshua fought the battle of Jericho
 And the walls came tumbling down!

I don't know if children learn this little song anymore. If not, it's a shame.

Today, we learn that Jesus has just passed through Jericho on the way to Jerusalem. Unfortunately, our lectionary has skipped Mark 10:32-45. We read those verses back in Lent on the Sunday before Palm Sunday. They help to put all of this in context.

Jesus is on His way to Jerusalem with a purpose. He explained it to His disciples in verses 33-34, "See, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests and the scribes, and they will condemn him to death and deliver him over to the Gentiles. And they will mock him and spit on him, and flog him and kill him. And after three days he will rise."

This is the third time that He has clearly described His mission to His disciples. Nevertheless, in the next few verses, James and John request positions of honor when Jesus enters His glory. Jesus concludes this section by again detailing His mission, "The Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45).

This brings us to Jericho. I can never think of Jericho without thinking of Joshua and “the walls came tumbling down!” It’s hard for me to imagine that Jesus could pass through Jericho without remembering Joshua’s miraculous victory. But for Jesus, it must have been an even more moving experience on this day. He was on the way to Jerusalem where the walls of sin and death would soon come tumbling down.

But there is one more thing that you may not have noticed, Jesus’ name! Jesus is a transliteration of His name from Greek. You may have learned that, in Aramaic, His name is Yeshua. But you may not know that Yeshua in Hebrew is Joshua! Joshua, Yeshua, and Jesus all mean “The Lord saves!” Jesus is named for the Old Testament hero who fought the battle of Jericho! Maybe you recall the words of the angel to Joseph recorded in Matthew 1:21, “She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.” Jesus is on a mission to fulfill the promise given in His name, namely to save His people from their sins! Is there a better place to remember this than in Jericho?

And so, leaving Jericho, He comes across a blind beggar, named Bartimaeus. Since Mark is writing in Greek and he knows most of his readers don’t know Aramaic, he explains that Bartimaeus means “Son of Timaeus” in Aramaic.

Bartimaeus is an amazing fellow. Jesus’ fame and reputation have come even to Jericho. Bartimaeus can hear the great crowd and asks about the commotion. One of the throng informs him that it is Jesus of Nazareth. But when he calls out, Bartimaeus doesn’t call for Jesus of Nazareth. No, he calls out for Jesus, the Son of David!

Bartimaeus knew what we know. Jesus, our savior, is from the house and lineage of David! He is the long-awaited Messiah. He is the Christ.

Despite his insight, the crowd tries to silence him. Bartimaeus will have none of it. He shouts out louder and longer!

What is he shouting? “Jesus, have mercy on me!” He is shouting our constant prayer. “Jesus, have mercy on me!”

We pray this weekly in the *Kyrie*. We are never without the need for Jesus’ mercy.

What often goes unnoticed is that the Greek word for mercy (*eleison*) is a translation of the Hebrew word *chesed*. The English Standard Version translates *chesed* as “steadfast love.”

Bartimaeus, undoubtedly, had sung countless times these words from the psalms:

Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, for his steadfast love (*chesed*) endures forever.

Or as the King James Version reads:

O give thanks unto the Lord; for he is good: for his mercy (*chesed*) endureth for ever.

Now the good and gracious Lord is right there in shouting distance. Bartimaeus cries out at the very top of his lungs, “Jesus, have mercy (*chesed*-steadfast love) on me.

Without a moment’s hesitation, the good and gracious Lord Jesus called out to him. With all his strength, Bartimaeus leaped to his feet and made his way to Jesus. How a blind man could do such a thing, I do not know. But it must have been quite a spectacle! Nothing would keep him from making His way to Jesus!

Beggars would generally be asking for money but Bartimaeus is a man of faith. He asks for and receives his sight. What an awesome miracle! Only God could do such a thing! But more than that, this is precisely what the long-awaited Messiah would do!

When John the Baptist sent his disciples to Jesus, they asked, “Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?” To this, Jesus answered, “Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them” (Matthew 11:1-5).

Indeed, here is the Messiah. He is on His way to Jerusalem. There He will suffer many things and die. And on the third day, he will rise again. For the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.

On a final note, I hope that you are not getting tired of some of these translation details. Jesus’ healing words to Bartimaeus are “Go your way; your faith has made you well.” The Greek word for “made you well” is

sozo. It is most often translated as “save.” In fact, in Matthew 1:21 it is the word used in this phrase, “He shall save his people from their sins.”

We may not share the blindness of Bartimaeus. But we do share with him the need for mercy, for God’s steadfast love. We need healing from Jesus not only for our physical ailments but more importantly for our spiritual blindness.

We rejoice that God has heard our cries for mercy. The Lord has saved us. The terrible wall of sin that separates us from God came tumbling down when Jesus gave His life as a ransom for us on the cross. We look forward to the day when we will leap from our graves to meet our gracious and merciful Lord Jesus. We take comfort in the knowledge that we can now go our way because our faith in Jesus has saved us.

“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 O Lord, thank You for hearing our continuing cries for mercy. Grant that we may receive Your gracious answers to our prayer with gratitude and joy.

C Amen.

L O Lord, we live in a world of tears. In Your mercy, we ask that You would restore to us shouts of joy for Your salvation.

C Amen.

L O Lord, as You heard and answered Bartimaeus in his plea for mercy. Move us to be Your hands of mercy for those in need.

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 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.

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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 Twenty-second Sunday after Pentecost

October 25 – October 31, 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 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.

Introit Psalm 131; antiphon Psalm 130:1–2

- L** Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord!
O Lord, hear my voice! Let your ears be attentive to the voice of my pleas for mercy!
C O Lord, my heart is not lifted up; my eyes are not raised too high;
I do not occupy myself with things too great and too marvelous for me.
L But I have calmed and quieted my soul, like a weaned child with its mother;
like a weaned child is my soul within me.
C O Israel, hope in the Lord
from this time forth and forevermore.
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 Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord!
O Lord, hear my voice! Let your ears be attentive to the voice of my pleas for mercy!

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. |

Our introit for this week is an interesting combination of Psalms 130 and 131. Psalm 131 is only three verses so the antiphon is taken from Psalm 130. Together they create an interesting commentary on our Gospel lesson and Bartimaeus' cry for mercy.

Like Bartimaeus, the psalmist experienced times of being in the depths of hopelessness and despair. To this day, we describe sadness and gloominess as feeling down!

However, being in the depths (or as my mother often said, "down in the dumps."), will force us to look up! When we look up from the depth of despair, we see a gracious and loving God. To Him, we cry, "Lord, have mercy upon us." And in His steadfast love, He hears and answers our prayers.

Hell has been described as an eternity of hopelessness. Thanks be to God! This is not the eternity that we face. Our hope in the Lord from this time forth and forevermore. Not only has He made heaven and earth, but He has sent His only-begotten Son to save His people from their sins.

Let us pray: Heavenly Father, shed Your mercy upon us in the depth of sadness, pain, or worry. Give us the joy of salvation won for us by Jesus. Grant us relief from spiritual pain. Give us a confident hope in You and Your gracious promises, through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Tuesday

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

C Amen.

Verse of the Day: Hebrews 12:2a

L Alleluia, Alleluia. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, Alleluia.

C Alleluia, Alleluia. The founder and perfecter of our faith. 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 helper of all who call on You, have mercy on us and give us eyes of faith to see Your Son that we may follow Him on the way that leads to eternal life; through the same Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

We don't know how long Bartimaeus sat alongside the road heading out of Jericho to Jerusalem before Jesus passed by. I can imagine that he had been blind for years. His lot in life was that of a beggar! None of us aspires to the vocation of beggar. When talking to a new mother or father, I've never heard one of them say, "I hope Johnny grows up to be a beggar."

But in reality that is what we are. After Martin Luther died a small piece of paper was found in his pocket. On it was written these few words, "We are beggars, this is true."

Like Bartimaeus, sometimes we recognize that we are beggars. Other times, we imagine that we are self-sufficient in all our needs.

The fiction of self-sufficiency only lasts for a short time. Eventually, all of our earthly abilities fail.

Beggars rely on the mercy of others. In our spiritual blindness, we don't recognize this. But everything we have comes from God's gracious and merciful hand.

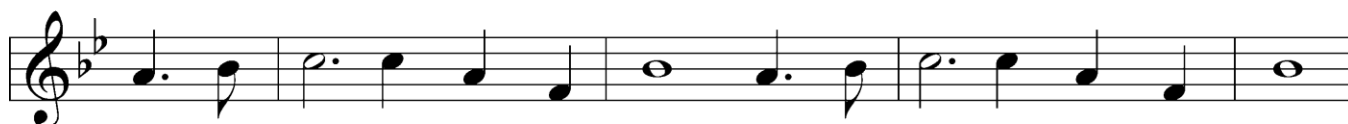
Above all, when it comes to eternity, we rely on God's grace and mercy for salvation. I am reminded of August Toplady's famous hymn, Rock of Ages. Stanza 3 begins this way: Nothing in my hand I bring; Simply to Thy cross I cling.

We are beggars. This is true. I thank God that He has given us the eyes of faith to see our need and the salvation He grants us in Jesus.

Rock of Ages, Cleft for Me Lutheran Service Book 761, Lutheran Worship 361, The Lutheran Hymnal 376



1 Rock of A - ges, cleft for me, Let me hide my - self in Thee;
2 Not the la - bors of my hands Can ful - fill Thy Law's de-mands;
3 Noth - ing in my hand I bring; Sim - ply to Thy cross I cling.
4 While I draw this fleet - ing breath, When mine eye - lids close in death,



Let the wa - ter and the blood, From Thy riv - en side which flowed,
Could my zeal no res - pite know, Could my tears for - ev - er flow,
Na - ked, come to Thee for dress; Help - less, look to Thee for grace;
When I soar to worlds un - known, See Thee on Thy judg - ment throne,



Be of sin the dou - ble cure: Cleanse me from its guilt and pow'r.
All for sin could not a - tone; Thou must save, and Thou a - lone.
Foul, I to the foun - tain fly; Wash me, Sav - ior, or I die.
Rock of A - ges, cleft for me, Let me hide my - self in Thee.

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Let us pray: O God, the helper of all who call on You, have mercy on us and give us eyes of faith to see Your Son that we may follow Him on the way that leads to eternal life; through the same 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: Hebrews 12:2a

L Alleluia, Alleluia. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, Alleluia.

C Alleluia, Alleluia. The founder and perfecter of our faith. Alleluia.

Psalm 126

- L** ¹ When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion, we were like those who dream.
C ² Then our mouth was filled with laughter, and our tongue with shouts of joy;
then they said among the nations, "The Lord has done great things for them."
L ³ The Lord has done great things for us; we are glad.
C ⁴ Restore our fortunes, O Lord, like streams in the Negeb!
L ⁵ Those who sow in tears shall reap with shouts of joy!
C ⁶ He who goes out weeping, bearing the seed for sowing,
shall come home with shouts of joy, bringing his sheaves with him.

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.

Reread Psalm 126. This time imagine that you are Bartimaeus reading this psalm for his devotions on the night when Jesus restored his sight. Every verse could easily apply to his personal situation.

If I was Bartimaeus, to see again might seem like a dream. I would have spent the entire day with a smile on my face. I would have been shouting for joy. I would spend the rest of my life telling people that the Lord has done great things for me.

In one way or another, this journey from tears to joy applies to each one of us. Living in a world of sin means that tears are bound to flow. But God in His mercy is good to us. He is able to change blindness to sight, curse to blessing, and death to life.

In three days, the sorrow of the cross was transformed into shouts of joy. We often live in the time between Good Friday and Easter. Faith allows us to anticipate the ultimate alleluias of the resurrection that awaits us all who put their trust in Jesus.

Prayer: Merciful Father and Lord of life, we live in a vale of tears but we rejoice at Your gracious promise to all Your servants that we shall be raised from death at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Thursday

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

Verse of the Day: Hebrews 12:2a

- L** Alleluia, Alleluia. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, Alleluia.
C Alleluia, Alleluia. The founder and perfecter of our faith. 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.

Jeremiah 31:7–9

⁷ Thus says the LORD:

“Sing aloud with gladness for Jacob,
and raise shouts for the chief of the nations;
proclaim, give praise, and say,
‘O LORD, save your people,
the remnant of Israel.’

⁸ Behold, I will bring them from the north country
and gather them from the farthest parts of the earth,
among them the blind and the lame,
the pregnant woman and she who is in labor, together;
a great company, they shall return here.

⁹ With weeping they shall come,
and with pleas for mercy I will lead them back,
I will make them walk by brooks of water,
in a straight path in which they shall not stumble,
for I am a father to Israel,
and Ephraim is my firstborn.

These three verses from Jeremiah restate a major theme found in our lessons this week: The relationship between God’s mercy and our joy. Jeremiah reports these amazing words from the Lord, “Sing aloud with gladness for Jacob, and raise shouts for the chief of the nations; proclaim, give praise, and say, ‘O LORD, save your people, the remnant of Israel.’” (Verse 7).

Why the joy? Jeremiah has been preaching repentance to an unrepentant people. God will punish this faithless nation with a stunning defeat and exile. Many tears will be shed at the destruction of Jerusalem and Solomon’s magnificent temple.

But one day the exile will end. In their tears, the once rebellious people will again seek God. Verse 9 tells us, “With weeping they shall come, and with pleas for mercy I will lead them back, I will make them walk by brooks of water, in a straight path in which they shall not stumble.” Then the remnant will return with joy and gladness.

In our world, we constantly hear cries for justice. With self-righteous indignation, social warriors cry out for their pound of flesh. We all understand the harshness of punishment demanded by the law.

But if God were simply a God of justice, we all would be condemned. God’s righteousness demands that sin is to be punished. We all deserve an eternity separated from God because of sinful rebellion against His holy law.

But God is also a God of mercy. When we feel the full weight of God’s justice, in tears we come to God with pleas for mercy. In Christ, He brings us back and restores us. We receive His forgiveness with shouts of joy and gladness.

I pray that we not only would enjoy God’s mercy but that we would learn to be people of mercy. Jesus had mercy on Bartimaeus. God places people around each of us who also need mercy.

When it comes to the relentless calls for justice, sometimes it might be good to remember the words of Abraham Lincoln in his second inaugural address, “With malice toward none, with charity for all.” Or even better, the words of Jesus, “He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone” (John 8:7). For “There will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance” (Luke 15:7).

In Thee Is Gladness Lutheran Service Book 818, Lutheran Worship 442, The Lutheran Hymnal n/a



1 In Thee is glad - ness A - mid all sad - ness, Je - sus,
2 Since He is ours, We fear no pow - ers, Not of
sun - shine of my heart. By Thee are giv - en The gifts of
earth nor sin nor death. He sees and bless - es In worst dis -
heav - en, Thou the true Re - deem - er art. Our souls Thou
tress - es; He can change them with a breath. Where - fore the
wak - est, Our bonds Thou break - est; Who trusts Thee sure - ly Has built se -
sto - ry Tell of His glo - ry With hearts and voic - es; All heav' n re -
cure - ly; He stands for - ev - er: Al - le - lu - ia! Our hearts are
joic - es In Him for - ev - er: Al - le - lu - ia! We shout for
pin - ing To see Thy shin - ing, Dy - ing or liv - ing
glad - ness, Tri - umph o'er sad - ness, Love Him and praise Him
To Thee are cleav - ing; Naught can us sev - er: Al - le - lu - ia!
And still shall raise Him Glad hymns for - ev - er: Al - le - lu - ia!

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Prayer: Almighty and most gracious God and Father, we implore You to turn the hearts of all who have forsaken You. When we wander from faithfulness, mercifully restore us that in gladness we may receive again the salvation won for us by Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Friday

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

Verse of the Day: Hebrews 12:2a

- L** Alleluia, Alleluia. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, Alleluia.
C Alleluia, Alleluia. The founder and perfecter of our faith. 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.

Hebrews 7:23–28

²³The former priests were many in number, because they were prevented by death from continuing in office, ²⁴but he holds his priesthood permanently, because he continues forever. ²⁵Consequently, he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them.

²⁶For it was indeed fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, innocent, unstained, separated from sinners, and exalted above the heavens. ²⁷He has no need, like those high priests, to offer sacrifices daily, first for his own sins and then for those of the people, since he did this once for all when he offered up himself. ²⁸For the law appoints men in their weakness as high priests, but the word of the oath, which came later than the law, appoints a Son who has been made perfect forever.

It's hard for me to read about high priests without thinking of Margaret. She is now with all the company of heaven but I remember her fondly. She would always greet me with this query, "How is the high priest today?" She was such a cheerful person that the thought of the term "high priest" puts a smile on my face.

What do you think of when you read about high priests? I can imagine that there are many answers to that question. However, when Hebrews was written, the people would naturally think of the temple in Jerusalem and the sacrifices offered there. God instituted daily sacrifices at the temple to prepare the people for when Jesus, our Great High Priest, would come and offer up Himself as the perfect sacrifice for sin.

When Jesus died on the cross, His sacrifice was once for all! There is no longer any need to sacrifice for sin. His mission is complete. You and I are able to rely on Jesus' sacrifice. We don't need to bring lambs to the altar of God any longer.

Our human efforts to pay the price of sin through sacrifice would never succeed anyway. Psalm 49:7-8 tells us: "Truly no man can ransom another, or give to God the price of his life, for the ransom of their life is costly and can never suffice." But when Jesus gave His life, it was God's own Son who offered Himself for us. Peter explains it this way, "You were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot" (1 Peter 1:18-19). And John the Baptist describes His sacrifice with these words, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29).

Following His sacrifice of Himself on the cross for us, Jesus continues to be our high priest by praying for us. Paul tells us in Romans 8:34, "Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us."

As the 7th Century hymn writer states:

Offered was He for greatest and for least,
Himself the victim and Himself the priest.

Prayer: Almighty, everlasting God, You gave Your only Son to be a High Priest. Grant that we would fully trust in His perfect sacrifice for sin 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 Psalm 91:11; 103:1

L He will command his angels concerning you

C to guard you in all your ways.

L Bless the Lord, O my soul,

C and all that is within me, bless his holy name!

Verse of the Day: Hebrews 12:2a

L Alleluia, Alleluia. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, Alleluia.

C Alleluia, Alleluia. The founder and perfecter of our faith. 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 10:46–52

⁴⁶And they came to Jericho. And as he was leaving Jericho with his disciples and a great crowd, Bartimaeus, a blind beggar, the son of Timaeus, was sitting by the roadside. ⁴⁷And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out and say, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!” ⁴⁸And many rebuked him, telling him to be silent. But he cried out all the more, “Son of David, have mercy on me!” ⁴⁹And Jesus stopped and said, “Call him.” And they called the blind man, saying to him, “Take heart. Get up; he is calling you.” ⁵⁰And throwing off his cloak, he sprang up and came to Jesus. ⁵¹And Jesus said to him, “What do you want me to do for you?” And the blind man said to him, “Rabbi, let me recover my sight.” ⁵²And Jesus said to him, “Go your way; your faith has made you well.” And immediately he recovered his sight and followed him on the way.

Martin Luther wrote, “I take no great delight in allegories.” He went on to say that he once “thought that everything had to be turned into allegories.” “I finally realized that to my own great harm I had followed an empty shadow and had left unconsidered the heart and core of the Scriptures. Later on, therefore, I began to have a dislike for allegories” (Luther’s Works Vol 2 page 150ff).

So with that in mind, I’m not suggesting that the restoring of sight to Bartimaeus is an allegory or that it should be interpreted allegorically. But I would like to share an interesting insight that I discovered while researching the name of Bartimaeus’ father, Timaeus.

Almost 400 years before Jesus met the son of Timaeus outside of Jericho on the road to Jerusalem, the Greek philosopher, Plato wrote what may be his greatest work known as “Timaeus” or “The Timaeus.” Throughout most of history, it was thought to illustrate the peak of Plato’s intellectual expertise. In it, the title character explains the formation of the universe and its inspiring order and beauty.

With this in mind, it is interesting to note that in our text the Son of Timaeus is blind! And by extension, those who follow human philosophy, even at its best as found in Plato, are spiritually blind.

Real sight is not found in the Son of Timeaus but in the Son of God. Those who follow worldly philosophy are condemned to a hopeless existence. But those who follow Jesus have their eyes opened to the ultimate reality of God's mercy and grace. May we, like Bartimaeus, leave our blind ways behind and find in Jesus the light of life.

Offered with apologies to Martin Luther, on this eve of the 504th anniversary of the nailing of the 95 Theses on the church door in Wittenberg.

Prayer: Lord God, heavenly Father, as Your Son gave sight to blind Bartimaeus, giving him eyes to see the one who is the healer of the nations, so give us sight to see the salvation prepared for us in Him who opens our eyes of faith; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

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