

The Second Sunday in Lent March 13, 2022

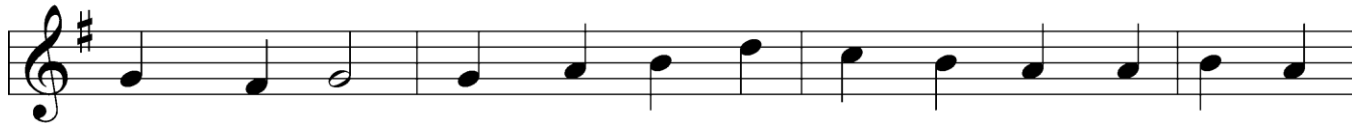
Jesus laments, “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not!” So also today, Jesus desires each one of us to repent and return to the Lord, our God. Yet although many hear the Savior’s call, few respond. Many answer, “NO!” Pray that your response to the Savior would be one of repentance and faith. Make a special point to share His invitation during this Lententide.

Jesus, Refuge of the Weary

Lutheran Service Book 423, Lutheran Worship 90, The Lutheran Hymnal 145



1 Je - sus, ref - uge of the wea - ry, Blest Re - deem - er,
2 Do we pass that cross un - heed - ing, Breath - ing no re -
3 Je - sus, may our hearts be burn - ing With more fer - vent



whom we love, Foun - tain in life's des - ert drea - ry, Sav - ior
pen - tant vow, Though we see You wound - ed, bleed - ing, See Your
love for You; May our eyes be ev - er turn - ing To be -



from the world a - bove: Of - ten have Your eyes, of - fend - ed,
thorn - en - cir - cled brow? Yet Your sin - less death has brought us
hold Your cross a - new Till in glo - ry, part - ed nev - er



Gazed up - on the sin - ner's fall; Yet up - on the
Life e - ter - nal, peace, and rest; On - ly what Your
From the bless - ed Sav - ior's side, Grav - en in our



cross ex - tend - ed, You have borne the pain of all.
grace has taught us Calms the sin - ner's deep dis - tress.
hearts for - ev - er, Dwell the cross, the Cru - ci - fied.

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 74:1–3; antiphon Psalm 69:9

L For zeal for your house has consumed me,
and the reproaches of those who reproach you have fallen on me.

C **O God, why do you cast us off forever?**

Why does your anger smoke against the sheep of your pasture?

L Remember your congregation, which you have purchased of old,
which you have redeemed to be the tribe of your heritage!
Remember Mount Zion, where you have dwelt.

C **Direct your steps to the perpetual ruins;
the enemy has destroyed everything in the sanctuary!**

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 For zeal for your house has consumed me,
and the reproaches of those who reproach you have fallen on 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 God You see that of ourselves we have no strength. By Your mighty power defend us from all adversities that may happen to the body and from all evil thoughts that may assault and hurt the soul; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
- C** Amen.

Jeremiah 26:8–15

⁸When Jeremiah had finished speaking all that the LORD had commanded him to speak to all the people, then the priests and the prophets and all the people laid hold of him, saying, “You shall die! ⁹Why have you prophesied in the name of the LORD, saying, ‘This house shall be like Shiloh, and this city shall be desolate, without inhabitant?’” And all the people gathered around Jeremiah in the house of the LORD.

¹⁰When the officials of Judah heard these things, they came up from the king’s house to the house of the LORD and took their seat in the entry of the New Gate of the house of the LORD. ¹¹Then the priests and the prophets said to the officials and to all the people, “This man deserves the sentence of death, because he has prophesied against this city, as you have heard with your own ears.”

¹²Then Jeremiah spoke to all the officials and all the people, saying, “The LORD sent me to prophesy against this house and this city all the words you have heard. ¹³Now therefore mend your ways and your deeds, and obey the voice of the LORD your God, and the LORD will relent of the disaster that he has pronounced against you. ¹⁴But as for me, behold, I am in your hands. Do with me as seems good and right to you. ¹⁵Only know for certain that if you put me to death, you will bring innocent blood upon yourselves and upon this city and its inhabitants, for in truth the LORD sent me to you to speak all these words in your ears.”

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

Gradual Hebrews 12:2

- L** O come, let us fix our eyes on Jesus,
C the founder and perfecter of our faith,
L who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame,
C and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

Psalms 4

- L** ¹Answer me when I call, O God of my righteousness! You have given me relief when I was in distress.
Be gracious to me and hear my prayer!
- C** ²O men, how long shall my honor be turned into shame?
How long will you love vain words and seek after lies?
- L** ³But know that the LORD has set apart the godly for himself; the LORD hears when I call to him.
- C** ⁴Be angry, and do not sin; ponder in your own hearts on your beds, and be silent.
- L** ⁵Offer right sacrifices, and put your trust in the LORD.
- C** ⁶There are many who say, “Who will show us some good?
Lift up the light of your face upon us, O LORD!”
- L** ⁷You have put more joy in my heart than they have when their grain and wine abound.
- C** ⁸In peace I will both lie down and sleep; for you alone, O LORD, make me dwell in safety.

Philippians 3:17—4:1

¹⁷Brothers, join in imitating me, and keep your eyes on those who walk according to the example you have in us. ¹⁸For many, of whom I have often told you and now tell you even with tears, walk as enemies of the cross of Christ. ¹⁹Their end is destruction, their god is their belly, and they glory in their shame, with minds set on earthly things. ²⁰But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, ²¹who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.

^{4:1}Therefore, my brothers, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm thus in the Lord, my beloved.

L This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

Verse of the Day: Luke 13:35

L Behold, your house is forsaken.

C And I tell you, you will not see me until you say, “Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!”

Luke 13:31–35

L The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke, the 13th chapter.

C Glory to You, O Lord.

³¹At that very hour some Pharisees came and said to [Jesus], “Get away from here, for Herod wants to kill you.”

³²And he said to them, “Go and tell that fox, ‘Behold, I cast out demons and perform cures today and tomorrow, and the third day I finish my course. ³³Nevertheless, I must go on my way today and tomorrow and the day following, for it cannot be that a prophet should perish away from Jerusalem.’ ³⁴O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not! ³⁵Behold, your house is forsaken. And I tell you, you will not see me until you say, ‘Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!’”

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.

Lord, Thee I Love with All My Heart

Lutheran Service Book 708, Lutheran Worship 413, The Lutheran Hymnal 429



1 Lord, Thee I love with all my heart; I pray Thee, ne'er from
2 Yea, Lord, 'twas Thy rich boun - ty gave My bod - y, soul, and
3 Lord, let at last Thine an - gels come, To A - br'ham's bos - om



me de - part, With ten - der mer - cy cheer me. Earth
all I have In this poor life of la - bor. Lord,
bear me home, That I may die un - fear - ing; And



has no plea - sure I would share. Yea, heav'n it - self were
grant that I in ev - 'ry place May glo - ri - fy Thy
in its nar - row cham - ber keep My bod - y safe in



void and bare If Thou, Lord, wert not near me. And should my
lav - ish grace And help and serve my neigh - bor. Let no false
peace-ful sleep Un - til Thy re - ap - pear - ing. And then from



heart for sor - row break, My trust in Thee can noth - ing shake.
doc - trine me be - guile; Let Sa - tan not my soul de - file.
death a - wak - en me, That these mine eyes with joy may see,



Thou art the por - tion I have sought; Thy pre - cious
Give strength and pa - tience un - to me To bear my
O Son of God, Thy glo - rious face, My Sav - ior



blood my soul has bought. Lord Je - sus Christ, my God and
cross and fol - low Thee. Lord Je - sus Christ, my God and
and my fount of grace. Lord Je - sus Christ, my prayer at -



Lord, my God and Lord, For - sake me not! I trust Thy Word.
Lord, my God and Lord, In death Thy com - fort still af - ford.
tend, my prayer at - tend, And I will praise Thee with - out end.

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Devotional Thoughts:

I was surprised the first time I attended a church with coffee cup holders in the pews. But then again, I shouldn't have been. We love our coffee and we love our comfort. But it's important to remember that being comfortable isn't always a good thing. Being comfortable is a bad thing if we become comfortable with our sin.

Not too long ago, I heard a famous preacher with a mammoth congregation state that he would not deal with difficult contemporary topics because it might keep people away from his church. I've noticed that some congregations declare themselves to be "welcoming" churches as a euphemistic way of saying that they don't make people feel uncomfortable about sin.

Jesus would have none of this. The only way people will come to Him for salvation is for them to recognize their need for Him. This made the Pharisees uncomfortable. They were delusional. They trusted in their personal righteousness. They were convinced that they were not counted among the sinners. They thought that they did not need forgiveness.

John the Baptist's preaching made Herod and Herodias uncomfortable about their adulterous behavior and for all the evil things that Herod had done (Luke 3:19). Herod arrested John the Baptist. While John was in prison, Herodias manipulated the situation to have him executed. John the Baptist was silenced. All was well. Then Jesus came preaching repentance.

When Herod heard about Jesus and all that was happening, he became perplexed (Luke 9:7). Now, it seems that he intends to deal with Jesus in the same way that he dealt with John the Baptist.

Luke doesn't tell us but Jesus was probably in Perea near where John was arrested and beheaded. For some unknown reason, the Pharisees warned Jesus about Herod's evil intentions. Jesus was unconcerned with the threats of that fox, Herod. Jesus knew His destiny and it was not Herod who would end His life. No, He would indeed meet Herod but it will be on His way to the cross in Jerusalem.

As Jesus turns His thoughts to Jerusalem, we hear His love for the people of this city pour from His heart in the famous words of verse 34:

O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it!

How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing!

Jesus' first visit to Jerusalem happened when he was 40 days old. During this visit to the temple, Simeon held Jesus in his arms and declared that he was now ready to depart in peace because his eyes had seen his salvation.

The Bible doesn't tell us how often Jesus visited Jerusalem. He was engaged in discussions with Bible scholars in the temple when He was twelve years old. We can assume that He and his family faithfully participated in pilgrimages to Jerusalem. He must have had many happy memories of the city.

It was the capital city of David and Solomon. It was the home of the kings of Judah. All of them were his ancestors.

But Jerusalem had an unsavory side. The city and its people seldom were faithful. Her kings and the people often disregarded God and His word.

Repeatedly, God called them back by sending them prophets but they rejected God and His servants. When God sent Jeremiah, the priests and false prophets said, "This man deserves the sentence of death, because he has prophesied against this city, as you have heard with your own ears" (Jeremiah 26:11).

God's love for these sinful people never came to an end. Time and again, He wanted to gather them under the shelter of His wings but they would not. These stubborn people refused God's love and chose to go their own way.

God's love for Jerusalem is representative of His love for all of humanity. Unfortunately, most of the human race continues to reject His love. They refuse to return to the Lord their God.

Nevertheless, Jesus continued His mission as the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. He did not run from Herod to avoid death. Rather, He knew that His execution would take place in the "holy" city of Jerusalem.

Throughout the Old Testament, countless sacrifices were offered in Jerusalem. They were representative of the perfect sacrifice that Jesus would offer. Jesus' death on the cross was the ultimate sacrifice. His sacrifice of Himself was once for all! Romans 6:10-11 tells us, "For the death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God. So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus."

Allow Lent to be a time when we become uncomfortable with our sin. Make Lent a time to "return to the Lord your God, for He is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love" (Joel 2:13).

Gather again with God's people under the loving wings of your savior, Jesus. Receive the forgiveness, life, and salvation that He won for you on the cross. Look forward to the day when we celebrate His resurrection from the dead on Easter. Let us live our new life together in Him until He calls us to our heavenly home. May we never be counted among those who would not answer His gracious call.

"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, as in the time of Jeremiah, Your people continue to face opposition for speaking Your word of truth. Grant us faithfulness and courage as we proclaim Your eternal message of sin and salvation through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

C Amen.

L O Lord, teach us to remember that our citizenship is in heaven. Grant us Your Holy Spirit that we would live lives of faithfulness to the cross of Christ and reject the temptation of earthly glory, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

C Amen.

L O Lord, when we seek to do Your will there are people who oppose us. Let us not grow weary of faithfulness but seek refreshment under the loving wings of our Savior through the same Jesus Christ our Lord.

C Amen.

L Almighty God, govern the kingdoms of this world according to Your holy and gracious will. Protect those in harm's way because of the war in Ukraine, especially the innocent men, women, and children. Curb what is evil and promote what is good among us wherever we live in this fallen world.

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 this pandemic. Thank You that are now experiencing a decline in the number of new infections and an ease of

restrictions. Continue to strengthen all those who serve us in the medical field. Give Your comfort and peace to all who are suffering from this illness or others. Be with those who mourn. Grant to them the hope and assurance of a blessed reunion in heaven.

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.

On My Heart Imprint Your Image

Lutheran Service Book 422, Lutheran Worship 100, The Lutheran Hymnal 179



On my heart im - print Your im - age, Bless - ed Je - sus, King of grace,



That life's rich-es, cares, and plea-sures Nev - er may Your work e-rase;



Let the clear in - scrip-tion be: Je - sus, cru - ci - fied for me,



Is my life, my hope's foun - da - tion, And my glo - ry and sal - va - tion!

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 Second Sunday in Lent

March 14 – March 19, 2022

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: Luke 13:35

- L** Behold, your house is forsaken.
- C** And I tell you, you will not see me until you say, "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!"

Introit Psalm 74:1–3; antiphon Psalm 69:9

- L** For zeal for your house has consumed me,
and the reproaches of those who reproach you have fallen on me.
- C** O God, why do you cast us off forever?
Why does your anger smoke against the sheep of your pasture?
- L** Remember your congregation, which you have purchased of old,
which you have redeemed to be the tribe of your heritage!
Remember Mount Zion, where you have dwelt.
- C** Direct your steps to the perpetual ruins;
the enemy has destroyed everything in the sanctuary!
- 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** For zeal for your house has consumed me,
and the reproaches of those who reproach you have fallen on 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.

At dinner with friends, several simultaneous conversations will spring up. Sometimes the discussion next to me turns out to be more interesting than the one I'm engaged in. It may be that they were talking about a friend with an illness, the death of a loved one, or something as mundane as a recent movie. Pretty soon, I become so distracted that I must pardon myself and interrupt my neighbors to learn more. Has that ever happened to you? I'm sure in a previous generation it would have been considered a major social blunder. Maybe it still is today!

This scenario came to mind as I studied our introit for this week. It is only 3 verses from Psalm 74 and one verse from Psalm 69. Reading these few verses made it seem as though I was only catching part of a conversation. They whetted my appetite and I needed to know more.

Psalm 74 is 23 verses in total and Psalm 69 is 36. I don't have time to discuss them fully today but let me share this thought from Walter Roehrs on Psalm 74:

This psalm will rise as fervently from the hearts and lips of God's *congregation* as it did in ancient Israel, whenever and wherever ruthless anti-God forces threaten to reduce all that is holy to *perpetual ruins*, making shambles of sanctuaries and suppressing worship. When this lament and prayer was first uttered, the temple in Jerusalem lay in ruins, burned to the ground by the Babylonian conqueror.¹

Psalm 69 is an apt companion. It begins with these words from David, "Save me, O God!"

If you are concerned about the Church or feel under personal attack because of your faith, you are not the first. In all likelihood, you won't be the last. Nevertheless, God does not abandon His people. Christ builds His Church. It is good to remember His words in Matthew 16:18, "On this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

Martin Luther puts it this way:

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.

A Mighty Fortress Is Our God, stanza 3

Let us pray:

The Word they still shall let remain
Nor any thanks have for it;
He's by our side upon the plain
With His good gifts and Spirit.
And take they our life,
Goods, fame, child, and wife,
Though these all be gone,
Our vict'ry has been won;
The Kingdom ours remaineth. Amen.

A Mighty Fortress Is Our God, stanza 4

¹Walter H. Roehrs and Martin H Franzmann, joint author, *Concordia Self-Study Comentary*, electronic ed., 376 (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1998, c1979).

Tuesday

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

Verse of the Day: Luke 13:35

- L** Behold, your house is forsaken.
C And I tell you, you will not see me until you say, “Blessed is he who comes in the name of 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.

- L** Let us pray: O God You see that of ourselves we have no strength. By Your mighty power defend us from all adversities that may happen to the body and from all evil thoughts that may assault and hurt the soul; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
C Amen.

I’m incredibly unobservant. There are many times when Valerie and I are driving and she will point out something interesting that I’ve totally missed. Sometimes I may have driven by dozens of times!

Other times, when we’ve spent an evening out, she will ask me what I thought about something in the room where we were eating. I’ll turn to her and say, “I didn’t notice.”

Many of us go through life in that way. We walk into situations and never really notice what is going on. This is particularly bad when we find ourselves in dangerous situations and are totally unaware of the peril we face.

God is always aware. He sees us for who we are and we are often lambs among wolves. Like sheep, we are blissfully unaware of the danger and have no way to protect ourselves.

But the Good Shepherd can defend us from all adversities. Many of them we don’t even see. The most dangerous of these are those that attack the soul. But the Good Shepherd has laid down His life for the sheep. With Him at your side, you can fear no evil for He is with you. His rod and His staff, they comfort you.

Let us pray: O God You see that of ourselves we have no strength. By Your mighty power defend us from all adversities that may happen to the body and from all evil thoughts that may assault and hurt the soul; 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: Luke 13:35

- L** Behold, your house is forsaken.
C And I tell you, you will not see me until you say, “Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!”

Psalm 4

- L** ¹Answer me when I call, O God of my righteousness! You have given me relief when I was in distress.
Be gracious to me and hear my prayer!
C ²**O men, how long shall my honor be turned into shame?**
How long will you love vain words and seek after lies?
L ³But know that the LORD has set apart the godly for himself; the LORD hears when I call to him.
C ⁴**Be angry, and do not sin; ponder in your own hearts on your beds, and be silent.**
L ⁵Offer right sacrifices, and put your trust in the LORD.
C ⁶**There are many who say, “Who will show us some good?**
Lift up the light of your face upon us, O LORD!”
L ⁷You have put more joy in my heart than they have when their grain and wine abound.
C ⁸**In peace I will both lie down and sleep; for you alone, O LORD, make me dwell in safety.**

Kyrie

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

What prompts you to call out to God? I have some regular prayer habits but there are many other times when I pray spontaneously because of some distressing situation faced by me or others.

Often, David was prompted to pray because God’s enemies and the enemies of godly people were pressing in on them. He begins Psalm 4 with a passionate call for God to hear his prayer. In the past, God gave him relief and now he needs God’s help again.

David loves God and is committed to Him but he is surrounded by people who ridicule his faithfulness. David asks God, “How long will this continue?”

This is an ongoing problem for God’s people. I may be extra sensitive to this but I constantly hear people in the media mock or belittle Christianity. Comedians have become famous by ridiculing faithful men and women. If the things said about the Church were applied to other religious or ethnic groups, modern progressive people would thoroughly condemn them. However, when applied to Christian people these same things are frequently tolerated and even applauded.

Does this make you angry? It makes me angry. But anger is no excuse for sin. I am still called upon to love my enemies. We must heed David’s words spoken by inspiration, “Be angry, and do not sin.” The Apostle Paul repeats David’s admonition with these words, “Be angry and do not sin” and then he adds, “do not let the sun go down on your anger” (Ephesians 4:26). We should not let anger dominate our thinking. We can feel justified in our righteous anger but we must not let it last. As evening approaches, the proper thing to do is place it all in God’s hands.

It is understandable that we should be angered by those who oppose God and laugh at us for our faithfulness. However, this should never lead us to sin. Rather, like David, this ridicule and mockery should move us to prayer.

God will care for us in these stressful situations. He will give us joy and peace in our hearts so that we may lie down in safety.

Prayer: O Lord, thank You for hearing and answering our prayers in Your own time and in Your own way. Grant us grace to trust that Your will is always best for us even when You answer our prayers with encouragement to patience. Give us Your Spirit so that anger does not dominate our lives and lead us to sin. Move us to forgive as You have forgiven us so we may rest secure in Your joy and peace through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Thursday

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

C Amen.

Verse of the Day: Luke 13:35

L Behold, your house is forsaken.

C And I tell you, you will not see me until you say, “Blessed is he who comes in the name of 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.

Jeremiah 26:8–15

⁸When Jeremiah had finished speaking all that the LORD had commanded him to speak to all the people, then the priests and the prophets and all the people laid hold of him, saying, “You shall die! ⁹Why have you prophesied in the name of the LORD, saying, ‘This house shall be like Shiloh, and this city shall be desolate, without inhabitant?’” And all the people gathered around Jeremiah in the house of the LORD.

¹⁰When the officials of Judah heard these things, they came up from the king’s house to the house of the LORD and took their seat in the entry of the New Gate of the house of the LORD. ¹¹Then the priests and the prophets said to the officials and to all the people, “This man deserves the sentence of death, because he has prophesied against this city, as you have heard with your own ears.”

¹²Then Jeremiah spoke to all the officials and all the people, saying, “The LORD sent me to prophesy against this house and this city all the words you have heard. ¹³Now therefore mend your ways and your deeds, and obey the voice of the LORD your God, and the LORD will relent of the disaster that he has pronounced against you. ¹⁴But as for me, behold, I am in your hands. Do with me as seems good and right to you. ¹⁵Only know for certain that if you put me to death, you will bring innocent blood upon yourselves and upon this city and its inhabitants, for in truth the LORD sent me to you to speak all these words in your ears.”

Jeremiah lived in a difficult time. Judah was heading for disaster. Unless they would mend their unfaithful ways and deeds, God would allow Judah to be defeated, Jerusalem and the temple to be destroyed, and the people to be carried into exile. God gave Jeremiah the thankless task of bringing a warning to the people.

When he faithfully spoke God’s word in the house of the Lord, the priests and false prophets wanted him condemned to death. One of the most difficult things to do in life is to speak up against the majority when they are wrong.

We live in a country that is based on majority rule. Yet we know from history that there were times when the majority was wrong. For example, majority rule approved of and perpetuated slavery.

I am the child of a time when many in our church body were fond of saying that God’s word is not decided by a majority vote. While their motivation was wrong, what they said about majority votes was true.

God's word is not determined by majorities. Right and wrong are not determined by majorities. Morality and truth are not determined by majorities. Sometimes God calls upon a solitary soul such as Jeremiah to speak the truth of His holy word even when the whole world appears to be against him.

Jeremiah's word of warning went unheeded. Judah was defeated, Jerusalem and the temple were destroyed, and the people were carried into exile. But Jeremiah was faithful. May we also be faithful in our proclamation of law and gospel.

People still sin and need repentance. God still forgives sin for the sake of Jesus' death on the cross.

Let us pray: O Lord God, You called Jeremiah to faithfully speak Your word to people who refused to believe. Grant us Your Holy Spirit that we would hear and believe Your word and trust in Jesus for salvation. Amen.

Friday

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

C Amen.

Verse of the Day: Luke 13:35

L Behold, your house is forsaken.

C And I tell you, you will not see me until you say, "Blessed is he who comes in the name of 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.

Philippians 3:17—4:1

¹⁷Brothers, join in imitating me, and keep your eyes on those who walk according to the example you have in us. ¹⁸For many, of whom I have often told you and now tell you even with tears, walk as enemies of the cross of Christ. ¹⁹Their end is destruction, their god is their belly, and they glory in their shame, with minds set on earthly things. ²⁰But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, ²¹who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.

^{4:1}Therefore, my brothers, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm thus in the Lord, my beloved.

We learn by example. I recently tackled a difficult car repair task. The first thing I did was find a YouTube video to watch so I could understand what needed to be done and how to do it.

I know many people who follow the same strategy for do-it-yourself projects. But I must share one caution. Sometimes YouTube personalities give you the wrong advice or strategy.

Usually, I watch two or three videos on a repair to see if they agree. It's not uncommon to discover a person who should have watched YouTube before he complete his project!

The Philippians did not have YouTube but they had the Apostle Paul. If they wanted to learn how to live as God's people, they should imitate Him.

On the other hand, Paul needed to warn them that there were many bad examples. He warned the Philippians not to follow the example of people who made a god out of their bellies and had their minds on earthly things.

Many people on YouTube and social media seek to give us directions for living. Some of them are faithful to God and His word. But I am dismayed when I discover Christian friends who pass on ideas that are opposed to Christianity and the truth of God's word.

Because Jesus died on the cross for our sins and rose again, our citizenship is in heaven. We find our examples for godly living in Holy Scripture. The Apostle Paul's epistles are replete with examples and directions for Christian living. May God preserve us from following earthly wisdom and those whose glory is their shame.

Prayer: O Lord, thank You for the guide and example of Your faithful people in the Bible. Grant us the faith to fix our eyes on Jesus as we remember that our citizenship is in heaven. Amen.

Saturday

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

C Amen.

Gradual Hebrews 12:2

L O come, let us fix our eyes on Jesus,

C the founder and perfecter of our faith,

L who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame,

C and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

Verse of the Day: Luke 13:35

L Behold, your house is forsaken.

C And I tell you, you will not see me until you say, "Blessed is he who comes in the name of 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.

Philippians 3:20–21

²⁰But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, ²¹who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.

I'm not sure what to think of our modern American ritual known as "The Annual Performance Review." I've heard so many stories of how it can be abused that I wonder if it holds any real value. Nevertheless, it's going to be around for a long time.

If you have participated in such an activity, the following categories may be familiar to you:

Does Not Meet Expectations

Meets Some Expectations

Successfully Meets Expectations

Consistently Exceeds Expectations

Critiquing and evaluating our experiences has become a national pastime. Almost every hotel, restaurant, or service business has an online review somewhere. I am bombarded with emails asking me to review my latest purchase. I recently was on a horse and carriage tour where our guide asked us more than a half-dozen times to go online and give a positive review to the horse!

Some people adjust their tips after dinner based on the performance of the wait-staff. Books, movies, and sermons are all informally reviewed by my friends and relatives. I find myself participating in the sport as much as anyone else.

Almost thirty years ago, Valerie and I visited my brother who was stationed in Hawaii while he was in the navy. Everything impressed me. I loved the food, the weather, the beach, the waterfalls, the flowers, the people, and the list goes on. For months after the trip, I told people how much Hawaii “Exceeded My Expectations!”

I don’t know what heaven will be like but when I think of it, Hawaii comes to mind ;-) But heaven may be nothing like Hawaii. However, the Bible does give us some details about heaven. We know that we will live with God there. We know that there will be no more pain or sorrow or suffering. We know that God will wipe away every tear from our eyes.

But what will we be like in heaven? The Bible is very specific about the answer to that question. Our lowly bodies will be transformed to be like Jesus’ glorious body! We won’t become ghosts or spirits. We won’t become angels. As Jesus continued to have a glorified body after His resurrection from the dead, we too will have glorified bodies after our resurrection from the dead.

Christians have maintained this hope and assurance since the very first Easter. The Apostle Paul informs the Philippians about it in our Epistle lesson for this week. For this reason, Christians have treated the bodies of their deceased loved ones with reverence and respect. Every Christian burial is undertaken with the expectation of the resurrection of the dead and the day when God will transform our earthly bodies to be like Jesus’ glorious body.

Prayer: O Lord, thank You for the assurance of the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Thank you for the promise to transform our lowly bodies to be like Jesus’ glorious body. Grant us the peace and joy that results from knowing that Jesus has paid for our sins and opened to us the kingdom of heaven through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

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