

DEVOTION FOR THE FOURTH WEDNESDAY AFTER PENTECOST

PSALM 122

I was glad when they said to me, "Let us go to the house of the Lord!"

Our feet have been standing within your gates, O Jerusalem!

Jerusalem is built as a city that is bound firmly together,

To which the tribes go up, the tribes of the Lord, as was decreed for Israel, to give thanks to the name of the Lord.

There thrones for judgement were set, the thrones of the house of David.

Pray for the peace of Jerusalem! "May they be secure who love you! Peace be within your walls and security within your towers!"

For my brothers and companions' sake I will say, "Peace be within you!" For the sake of the house of the Lord our God, I will seek your good.

*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*

Old Testament Reading: Deuteronomy 7:1-26 *Israel warned against associating with foreign nations and their gods*

New Testament Reading: Acts 21:1-16 *Paul's resolve and faith tested*

"FOR THE SAKE OF THE GOSPEL"

Paul had a twofold reason for visiting Jerusalem. One was to deliver the offering he had gathered from the Gentile Christians to provide relief for the Jewish Christians, who had suffered from a famine. This was a way for the Gentiles to acknowledge their Jewish sisters and brothers, through whom the Messiah had come into the world. It also was a means of bridging the gulf that separated Jews and Gentiles, regarding the ceremonial law.

It was a visit that was filled with danger for Paul. He was infamous among the Jewish people in Judea. They saw him as a traitor; remembering his conversion from Judaism to Christianity, at Damascus. More than that Paul was seen as a trouble maker among the Jews in the dispersion; causing division within synagogues because of his teaching that Jesus is the Messiah. Worst of all his preaching of the freedom of the gospel, undermined what was most precious to devout Jews; obedience to the ceremonial law.

Fellow believers feared for Paul's safety. They begged him not to go. The Holy Spirit showed them what would happen to Paul in Jerusalem that he would be bound with chains. Paul's faith was being tested by the Spirit, so that he would make a defense of Christianity and the sincerity of his faith, in a most powerful way. So too in our lives, the Spirit puts challenges in our paths, so that we might grow stronger in grace through the exercise of our faith and more powerfully proclaim salvation in Jesus' Name.

Paul appreciated the love of his sisters and brothers in Christ and their concern for his safety, but his greatest concern was preaching the love of God in Jesus Christ. No one was more important than Jesus! Nothing was more important than proclaiming His love and offering salvation to all through faith in His name! For the sake of the gospel Paul said, "*I am ready not only to be imprisoned but also to die in Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.*" God grant the grace of such faith to us all.

“JESUS, NAME ABOVE ALL NAMES” (CCLI #453681)
Jesus, name above all names, beautiful Saviour, glorious Lord,
Emmanuel, God is with us, blessed Redeemer, living Word.

Jesus, loving Shepherd, Vine of the branches, Son of God.
Prince of Peace, Wonderful Counsellor, Lord of the universe, light of the world.

Jesus, Way of Salvation, King of kings, Lord of lords,
the way the truth and the Life, Mighty creator, my Saviour and friend.

PRAYER

Dearest Jesus through your Spirit, you showed Paul the things he would suffer in Jerusalem for the sake of your name. You blessed him with your grace; made him stronger in faith; and empowered him to proclaim the faith boldly. Bless us with your grace that empowered by your Spirit, we may love you more dearly and proclaim you more boldly, through the actions of our lives and the words of our lips. We pray in your Name. Amen

THE LORD’S PRAYER

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

THE CREED

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

BENEDICTION

Romans 8:36-37

“As it is written, ‘For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered.’ No in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.”