

Devotion for the Second Wednesday of Easter

Psalm 79:1-9

O God, the nations have come into your inheritance; they have defined your temple; they have laid Jerusalem in ruins.

They have given the bodies of your servants to the birds of the heavens for food, the flesh of your faithful to the beasts of the earth.

They have poured out their blood like water all around Jerusalem and there was no one to bury them.

We have become a taunt to our neighbours, mocked and derided by those around us.

How long, O Lord? Will you be angry forever? Will your jealousy burn like fire?

Pour out your anger on the nations that do not know you, and on the kingdoms that do not call upon your name!

For they have devoured Jacob and laid waste his habitation.

Do not remember against us our former iniquities; let your compassion come speedily to meet us, for we are brought very low.

Help us, O God or our salvation, for the glory of your name; deliver us and atone for our sins for your name's sake.

*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: Exodus 24:1-18 *Covenant confirmed*

New Testament Reading: John 3:1-36 *Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life*

Devotion: Life in His Name

In this chapter Jesus gave the example of the serpent being lifted up in the wilderness from the Old Testament, to show how He would bring forgiveness and life to the world. He said, “*And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him may have eternal life.*” The Serpent to which He referred, was a bronze representation of the serpents the Lord sent into the Israelite camp to bite and punish the people for their sin. The Lord sent the serpents so Israel would turn to the Lord in repentance, be healed and live. When the people cried out to the Lord for mercy, the Lord instructed Moses to craft a bronze serpent and raise it up on a pole before the children of Israel. Whoever was bitten by one of the serpents and looked at the bronze serpent in faith, was healed and lived.

The point of the story is that there are consequences for sin, which are both painful and deadly; and that the Lord always seeks to heal and forgive. As the psalmist sang, “*The Lord is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.*” He wounds the flesh that He may heal a greater injury of the spirit. Along with the punishment for sin the Lord also provided the means of healing, forgiveness and life. As another psalmist sang, “*With you there is forgiveness. Therefore you are feared.*”

In a far greater way God provided the means of healing, forgiveness and life to the world, by giving Jesus into death on the cross. He took on Himself the sin of the world so that whoever looks to Him in faith, may have eternal life. God gave His only begotten Son to pay the debt of sin and suffer its injury. All we have to do to receive the healing of forgiveness is to believe it. The bronze serpent was the means by which the Lord brought physical healing to the people of Israel at one time. Through the cross upon which Jesus was lifted up, the Holy Spirit brings spiritual healing in time through the forgiveness of sin; and total healing of body and spirit in eternity through the resurrection of Jesus. All who believe in Jesus have life in His Name!

Hymn: Christ is Arisen CCLI #453681
Christ is arisen, from the grave's dark prison.
So let our joy rise full and free; Christ our comfort true will be.
Alleluia!

Were not Christ arisen, then death were still our prison.
Now, with Him to life restored. We praise the Father of our Lord.
Alleluia!

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!
Now let our joy rise full and free; Christ our comfort true will be.
Alleluia!

The Lord's Prayer

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

Psalm 90:17

“Let your work be shown to your servants, and your glorious power to their children.
Let the favour of the Lord our God be upon us, and establish the work of our hands upon us;
yes, establish the work of our hands!”

Prayer

We thank you gracious Father in heaven that you so loved the world that you gave your only begotten Son to suffer the injury of sin and bear our iniquities on the cross. We thank you for the word and working of the Holy Spirit, who has opened our hearts to receive Jesus and believe in Him as Saviour and Lord. Always bless us with your Spirit that we may always believe and have life in His Name. Bless us this Easter season to share the name of Jesus, the forgiveness of sins and the promise of resurrection to life everlasting so others may receive and believe. Amen