

DEVOTION FOR THE ELVENTH WEEK OF PENTECOST

PSALM 139:13-18

For you created my inmost being, you knit me together in my mother's womb.

I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful; I know that full well.

My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place.

When I was woven together in the depths of the earth, you saw my unformed body.

All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.

How precious to me are your thoughts, O God! How vast is the sum of them! **Were I to count them, they would outnumber the grains of sand.**

When I awake, I am with you still.

*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*

Deuteronomy 22:1-30 *Laws of conduct and relationship to keep evil from Israel*

Questions for reflection

Why were people responsible for each other's property? Verses 1-4

Why was God concerned about the treatment of birds in verses 6-7?

Why was sexual identity and expression so important to God?

Romans 6:1-23 *Death and life in the Christian life*

Questions for reflection

To what did we die in our baptism?

We have been united with Christ in His death through baptism. To what will be united with Him at His return?
(Verse 4)

The wages of sin is death. What is the free gift God gives in Christ?

“THE WAGES VERSUS THE GIFT”

What are the worst wages you received for working? I remember pulling a wagon load of newspapers home from the depot each day and delivering them to doorsteps, rain or shine. Twice a month I would go door to door and collect the cost of the newspapers from the customers. The amount of money I kept as my wages was always much less than the amount I remitted to the publisher. My wages never seemed equal to the effort I expended delivering the newspapers.

What is the best gift you have received? When you were a child were you ever surprised with a brand-new bicycle, or a new wagon so you could deliver newspapers? Did you ever receive a gift that came with strings attached? A couple told me how they were offered a gift from a telemarketer. They accepted and received their gift as promised. However, they soon regretted their decision, because the string attached was a visit from a salesperson, who wouldn't leave until they bought a vacuum cleaner.

In our reading from Romans chapter six, Paul compares the wages we receive for sin with the free gift we receive from God in Christ Jesus. Sin pays the worst wages, for the wages of sin is death. God gives the best gift free, eternal life for the sake of Jesus Christ. It has been said that we have to work harder to get to hell than to get to heaven. We don't have to work to get heaven, because Jesus worked to earn us passage. We receive what He earned as a free gift! All we have to do to receive is to believe. God gives the greatest gift, free with no strings attached; eternal life received through faith in Jesus Christ.

“OH, BLESS THE LORD, MY SOUL” (Public Domain)

Oh, bless the Lord, my soul! Let all in me combine.
To aid my tongue to bless His name, whose favour is divine.

Oh, bless the Lord, my soul. Nor let His mercies lie.
Forgotten in un-thankfulness. And without praises die.

The Lord forgives my sins. And He relieves my pain;
The Lord has healed my sicknesses. And made me whole again.

He crowns my life with love. He ransoms from the grave;
He that redeemed my soul from hell, has sovereign power to save.

He fills the poor with good; He gives the sufferers rest;
The Lord has judgements for the proud, Relief for those oppressed.

His works and laws and ways, He made through Moses known.
But showed the world His loving heart, In Christ, his only Son.

Prayer

Lord God, you give gifts freely without strings attached to all flesh, day in and day out, from the bounty of your loving heart. As Jesus said, “You cause the sun to rise on the just and on the unjust and send rain on the evil and on the good.” The greatest gifts you give are knowledge of sin and separation from you through your holy law; forgiveness of sin and reconciliation with you through the gospel of Jesus. Thank you for the gift of faith in Jesus and the free gift of eternal life we have in Him. In His 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

Psalm 18:49-50

“For this I will praise you, O Lord, among the nations, and sing to your name. Great salvation He brings to His king, and shows steadfast love to His anointed, to David and his offspring forever.”