

DEVOTION FOR THE SECOND THURSDAY AFTER PENTECOST

PSALM 119:105-112

Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path.

I have taken an oath and confirmed it, that I will follow your righteous laws.

I have suffered much; renew my life, O Lord, according to your word.

Accept, O Lord, the willing praise of my mouth, and teach me your laws.

Though I constantly take my life in my hands, I will not forget your law.

The wicked have set a snare for me, but I have not strayed from your precepts.

Your statutes are my heritage forever; they are the joy of my heart.

My heart is set on keeping your decrees to the very end.

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: Numbers 32:1-42 *Two Tribes settle before the Jordan*

New Testament Reading: Acts 10:1-48 *The Gospel for the Gentiles*

“CLEAN & UNCLEAN”

One of the greatest distinctions in the covenant of Mount Sinai was the difference between the clean and the unclean. Certain animals were considered acceptable for food and sacrifice and others were neither to be sacrificed to the Lord, nor eaten by the children of Israel. This was one of the marks by which the Lord was set apart from the gods of the nations and the people of Israel from the nations.

The covenant Jesus made on the cross was different from the one made through Moses in that it included all nations. The gospel is to be proclaimed to all peoples, so that through faith in Jesus and baptism into His death and resurrection, all peoples may become God’s people. The need for sacrifice has passed away. Christ atoned for human sin. Therefore the distinction between unclean animals, foods and people has passed away.

The Holy Spirit indicated this in two ways in Acts chapter 10. First by showing Peter a vision of clean and unclean animals, telling him to eat and then saying, “*What God has made clean, do not call common.*” Second, by sending him to visit the home of a Roman centurion, to preach the good news of peace through Jesus. Peter realized the implications of the covenant Jesus made new through His dying and rising in that God no longer makes distinctions between peoples, but calls all people to turn to Him for cleansing from sin and inclusion into His people, through faith in Jesus and baptism in His name.

To make this point abundantly clear, the Holy Spirit fell upon the Gentile believers, as He had on the Jewish believers Pentecost morning. The sign of the Holy Spirit was meant to show the Jewish believers that the gospel was for all people. It is meant to show believers today that God makes no distinctions between people based on language, racial background, ethnicity or any other human prejudice. He calls all people everywhere through the gospel and blesses all who receive the gospel with faith, cleansing from sin in baptism and the promise of eternal life through the resurrection of Jesus.

“BAPTISMAL WATERS COVER ME”

**Baptismal waters cover me, as I approach on bended knee;
My Father’s mercy here I plead, for grievous sins of thought and deed.**

**I look to Christ upon the tree, His body broken there for me;
I lay before Him all my sin, my darkest secrets from within.**

**Lord, may your wounded hand impart, your healing to my broken heart;
Your love alone can form in me, a heart that serves you joyfully.**

**From your own mouth comes forth a word; your shepherd speaks, but you are heard;
Through him your hand now stretches out, forgiving sin, destroying doubt.**

**Baptismal waters cover me; Christ’s wounded hand has set me free;
Held in my Father’s strong embrace, with joy I praise Him for His grace.**

PRAYER

Holy Spirit, you showed Peter and the Jewish believers that the dietary distinctions of the Mount Sinai Covenant have been fulfilled in Jesus, served their purpose and have passed away. We are not to call anything unclean that God has made clean. In the same way the covenant made new in the blood of Jesus, makes no distinction between peoples, but is made and offered for all people to receive. We thank you for your grace that makes no distinction among us, but reaches out to us who come from many racial, linguistic and ethnic backgrounds. You dwell within our bodies and within the body of believers that we may all be one in Christ Jesus. Bless us to reach out to others without distinction, sharing the good news of forgiveness and salvation through faith in Jesus and baptism into His holy 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

Ephesians 4:4-7

“There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ’s gift.”