

DEVOTION for PENTECOST 18

Psalm 104:27-35

These all look to you, to give them their food in due season.

When you give it to them, they gather it up; when you open your hand, they are filled with good things.

When you hide your face, they are dismayed;

when you take away their breath, they die and return to their dust.

When you send forth your Spirit, they are created, and you renew the face of the ground.

May the glory of the Lord endure forever; may the Lord rejoice in His works,

Who looks on the earth and it trembles, who touches the mountains and they smoke!

I will sing to the Lord as long as I live; I will sing praise to my God while I have being.

May my meditation be pleasing to Him, for I rejoice in the Lord.

Let sinners be consumed from the earth, and let the wicked be no more!

Bless the Lord, O My soul! Praise the Lord!

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

James 5:1-20

Faith expressed in justice, suffering and restoration

- 1) Why is it tempting to put our trust in worldly wealth?
- 2) Why is patience an important part of the Christian life?
- 3) Why is it important to pray?

Mark 9:38-50

Sin, temptation, reward and life

- 1) What rewards can we expect?
- 2) Why does Jesus speak so strongly against causing children to stumble?
- 3) Why is sin worse than losing a body part?

“CHILDREN”

Children were an important part of Jesus’ ministry. In a society where children were to keep their distance from adults not in their family, Jesus welcomed children and blessed them. When his disciples tried to prevent parents from bringing their children, Jesus rebuked them. He said, *“Let the little children come to me for to such as these belongs the kingdom of heaven.”* Jesus honoured children for their innocence and He offered them as examples of faith, saying *“Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it.”*

Conversely, Jesus reserved His harshest words for people who would cause children to sin. He said that if anyone causes a child who believes in Him to sin, *“It would be better for him if a great millstone were hung around his neck and he were thrown into the sea.”* Children are particularly vulnerable to harm, because of their small size and developing stature. In times of warfare or famine, children suffer the most grievously. Even in times of peace, children are more susceptible than adults to disease and the effects of malnutrition. During Jesus’ life, it is estimated that 60% of live births had died by the time their age cohort reached 16 years.

The greatest harm that anyone can do to a child is to lead her or him, away from Jesus. That’s why Jesus was angry with His disciples. That’s why He spoke so harshly against those who caused children who believe in Him to sin. On the other hand, the most loving thing we can do for children is to bring them to Jesus. We honour God and love children, by leading them to Jesus; teaching them His love, so that they may believe and nourishing their faith with the word, so that as they grow in stature and strength they may also grow strong in the Lord. The worst child abuse is to neglect or destroy the faith of a child in her or his Saviour. The most loving thing adults can do for children is the lead them to the arms of Jesus.

“HOSANNA, LOUD HOSANNA”

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**Hosanna, loud hosanna. The little children sang;
Through pillared court and temple, The lovely anthem rang.
To Jesus, who had blessed them, close folded to his breast.
The children sang their praises. The simplest and the best.**

**From Olivet they followed, Mid an exultant crowd.
The victor palm branch waving. And chanting clear and loud.
The Lord of men and angels, rode on in lowly state.
Nor scorned that little children, should on his bidding wait.**

**“Hosanna in the highest!” That ancient song we sing.
For Christ is our Redeemer, The Lord of heav’n our King.
Oh, may we ever praise him, with heart and life and voice.
And in his blissful presence, eternally rejoice!**

PRAYER

Dearest Jesus, we thank you for calling us to yourself through the gospel, creating faith in our hearts through your Spirit and nurturing us daily by your grace. Bless us to always treasure you as our greatest wealth in time and for eternity. Help us share your Name and your love with all people, in particular with young children, so that they may know you as Lord and trust you as Saviour from childhood to old age and to eternity. We ask this 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

Matthew 5:9

“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.”

Bible Knowledge Quiz

- 1) Which King of Judah offered 1,000 bulls and 7,000 sheep at Passover?
- 2) What did the angel who led Ezekiel through the New Temple use for a measure?
- 3) What did the angel who led John through the New Jerusalem use for a measure?

Answers to Last Week’s Quiz

- 1) Paul saw things a man is not permitted to tell (2 Corinthians 12:4).
- 2) Isaiah saw the Lord seated on His throne (Isaiah 6:1).
- 3) John saw a new heaven and a new earth and the new Jerusalem (Revelation 21:1-2).