

## Devotion for the Fourth Thursday of Easter

### Psalm 89:1-5

**I will sing of the steadfast love of the Lord, forever;  
with my mouth I will make known your faithfulness to all generations.**

For I said, “Steadfast love will be built up forever; in the heavens you will establish your faithfulness.”

**You have said, “I have made a covenant with my chosen one; I have sworn to David my servant:**

‘I will establish your offspring forever; and build your throne for all generations.’

**Let the heavens praise your wonders, O Lord, your faithfulness in the assembly of the holy ones!**

*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: Leviticus 17:1-16 *The place of sacrifice*

New Testament Reading: John 16:1-33 *Jesus has overcome the world*

### Sorrow and Joy

The disciples were filled with sorrow as Jesus said goodbye and prepared them for His arrest and death. He didn't tell them they were wrong to feel sorrow. He didn't say they should act 'like men' and 'keep a stiff upper lip.' Those are the things people say to discourage the expression of sorrow, so that the suffering keep it to themselves, keep it inside and don't make others feel uncomfortable. Jesus didn't soften the blow. He straight out said, “*You will weep and lament.*” Any other response to the gravity of such a situation would have been foolish. The disciples could no more refrain from feeling sorrow and expressing sadness at Jesus' departure, than a woman could refrain from feeling pain and expressing suffering at the moment of childbirth. Yet even as a woman's sorrow passes into joy at the birth of a child, the disciples' sorrow would turn to joy when they saw Jesus again in His resurrection.

We tend to feel more comfortable with the expression of joy than with the expression of sorrow. It is an acceptable expression of faith to shout “Hallelujah.” People question our faith when we cry out in sorrow. Perhaps we question our own faith, when we are overcome by grief and enveloped in sorrow. Jesus encouraged the disciples, not by dismissing or forbidding their sorrow, but by promising the Holy Spirit to help them and by assuring them they would see Him again. Paul spoke in a similar manner in the first letter to the Thessalonians, when he said that we grieve, but not as those who have no hope. Our hope in sorrow is Jesus, who died for our sins and rose for our justification.

The human heart is most open to the comfort of Christ and the help of the Holy Spirit, in times of grief. When we sorrow, our defenses come down and the Spirit is able to enter our hearts through the word and give us comfort and hope in Jesus, who died for our sins and rose for our eternal life. Jesus said, “*In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world.*” In the world we have sorrow, there's no denying it and no getting around it. But in Christ we have comfort and hope. He has overcome the world through His cross and conquered death in His resurrection. He will call us to rise and we will see His face. Sorrow will be forever gone and we will shout “Hallelujah” in His presence forever.

**“O GOD, OUR HELP IN AGES PAST” (Public Domain)**

**O God, Our Help in Ages Past, our hope for years to come,  
Our shelter from the stormy blast, And our eternal home.**

**Under the shadow of Thy throne, Thy saints have dwelt secure;  
Sufficient is Thine arm alone, And our defence is sure.**

**Before the hills in order stood, Or earth received her frame,  
From everlasting Thou art God, To endless years the same.**

**A thousand ages in Thy sight Are like an evening gone,  
Short as the watch that ends the night, Before the rising sun.**

**Time, like an ever rolling stream, Soon bears us all away;  
We fly forgotten as a dream, Dies at the opening day.**

**O God, Our Help in Ages Past, Our hope for years to come,  
Be Thou our guard while troubles last And our Eternal home!**

### **Prayer**

Lord Jesus we thank you for the comfort and help of your Spirit. May your Spirit abide within our bodies that they may be your holy temples, places of spiritual sacrifice of worship and praise. May your Spirit comfort us in our sorrows and encourage us in our faith through the word, by the sacraments and through our fellowship with fellow believers. You have overcome the world. May your victory be expressed in our lives, in righteous living, the kindness of forgiveness towards others and ultimately in our share of your resurrection. In your name we pray. 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**

**John 14:1-2**

**“Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. In my Father’s house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you?”**