

DEVOTION FOR THE THIRD TUESDAY AFTER PENTECOST

PSALM 119:137-144

Righteous are you, O Lord, and your laws are right.

The statutes you have laid down are righteous; they are fully trustworthy.

My zeal wears me out, for my enemies ignore your words.

Your promises have been thoroughly tested, and your servant loves them.

Though I am lowly and despised, I do not forget your precepts.

Your righteousness is everlasting and your law is true.

Trouble and distress have come upon me, but your commands are my delight.

Your statutes are forever right; give me understanding that I may live.

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 36:1-13 *Inheritance rights of women*

New Testament Reading: Acts 14:1-28 *The Apostles experience opposition*

“GOD HAS COME DOWN TO US”

Paul and Barnabas had the custom of first sharing the gospel in the synagogues among the Jews and with the Gentiles who were attached to the synagogue. Jesus had sent the disciples first to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. The apostles kept His word, both out of deference for the place the Jewish people have in the plan of salvation; and also because the Gentiles in the synagogue were familiar with Moses and the prophets and it was through them that the apostles showed Jesus to be the Messiah.

It was a different matter sharing the gospel with Gentiles who had no contact with Jewish people and the Hebrew Scriptures. A case in point is the encounter Paul and Barnabas had with the pagan worshippers at Lystra. Paul spoke the gospel. He saw a paralyzed man. Paul realized he had faith to be made well. In order to reinforce his point about Jesus, he told the man to stand up. Doubtless this reinforced the faith of the man who was made well, but it was misunderstood by the onlookers, who lacked the context of scripture to understand the sign.

They understood the sign according to their religious beliefs and to them this meant that Paul and Barnabas were none other than the gods Hermes and Zeus. They rushed to worship them and give them divine honour. They shouted in their own dialect, “*The gods have come down to us.*” When we share the gospel we must take care to ensure it will be understood correctly by those who hear. When Paul and Barnabas realize the misunderstanding, they are horrified. They came not to proclaim themselves as gods, but Jesus as Lord.

God has come down to us in the person of Jesus, conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. God came to the people of Lystra through the preaching of Jesus as the Saviour; through Him God calls all people to Himself in repentance and forgiveness. God comes to all people every day in the kindness of creation. He gives us rain and fruitful seasons. He satisfies our hearts with gladness. He comes to all people through the gospel of Jesus. He blesses our hearts with faith and the fruits of the Holy Spirit. Ultimately He will gladden our hearts eternally, in the resurrection of Jesus Christ to a new and everlasting life.

“FROM ALL THAT DWELL BELOW THE SKIES” (CCLI #453681)

From all that dwell below the skies.

Let the Creator’s praise arise; Alleluia, Alleluia!

Let the Redeemer’s Name be sung, through every land by every tongue.

Alleluia, Alleluia! Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

Eternal are Thy mercies, Lord. Eternal truth attends Thy Word.

Alleluia, Alleluia! Thy praise shall sound from shore to shore,

Till suns shall rise and set no more.

Alleluia, Alleluia! Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

All praise to God the Father be. All praise, eternal Son, to Thee.

Alleluia, Alleluia! Whom with the Spirit we adore. Forever and forevermore.

Alleluia, Alleluia! Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, you express your kindness daily in your providential care of the earth and all who dwell in it; every creature great and small. In Jesus, you have come down to us to provide for our greatest need; to be healed in relationship with you and to be nourished by your Spirit in the living word of Christ our Saviour. In the care and kindness you provide in our daily lives, may we see the testimony to the greatest kindness you provide for us and all people, in Jesus our Saviour. 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 146:5-7

“Blessed is he whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope is in the Lord his God, who made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, who keeps faith forever; who executes justice for the oppressed, who gives food to the hungry.”