

Pentecost Sunday / May 24, 2026

Psalm 25:7

“Remember not the sins of my youth or my transgressions; according to your steadfast love remember me, for the sake of your goodness.”

Forgive My Sins

Pentecost Sunday marks the beginning of the second semester of the church year, the Semester of the Church. The first semester is the Semester of the Lord, beginning with Jesus' clothing Himself with our humanity and coming into our world at Advent and Christmas. The Semester of the Lord continues with Epiphany, in which Jesus reveals Himself through word and wonder as the Son of God, the Messiah. Next follows Lent in which we prepare ourselves for the purpose for which Jesus came into the world, the atonement of human sin. The pinnacle of the season of the Lord is Good Friday and Easter, as on the cross Jesus suffered and died to offer Himself as the sacrifice atonement for sins of the world. The effect of His victory over sin and death was seen when He rose on the third day, the first fruits of those who believe. Jesus' resurrection testifies to the life we have in Him now through faith and the life we will have through Him in our share of His resurrection.

The Semester of the Lord concludes with the seven weeks of Easter during which Jesus showed Himself alive to the church as Luke says, *“through many convincing proofs.”* Jesus showed Himself alive to the church, because it is through the Church that Jesus shows Himself alive to the world. The second half of the Church Year is known as the Semester of the Church, beginning with Pentecost Sunday. During the season of Pentecost, the Church shows Jesus alive to the world and calls children, women and men to repent, confess their sins and sinfulness and receive Jesus as their Saviour and the salvation God gives in and through Him. Jesus told the disciples they would do greater things than He did. How could such a thing be? After all Jesus raised the dead, healed people's infirmities and disabilities and cured their illnesses. The greater thing the disciples and the church that follows through them does, is proclaim Jesus as the world's only Saviour, calling people to believe through the gospel. There is no healing more important than the healing of the cross, which we experience as forgiveness for the sake of Jesus. There is no healing greater than the healing of the soul that comes through the gospel and faith in Jesus. The work of the church, inspired and empowered by the Holy Spirit, is to proclaim forgiveness in Jesus to the nations.

The apostles frequently quoted the psalms in their presentation of the gospel and as prophecies of Jesus' death and resurrection. In our text from Acts, Peter quotes Psalm 16 as a prophecy of Jesus' resurrection saying, *"For you will not abandon my soul to Hades, or let your Holy One see corruption."* In speaking of Jesus' ascension on high to the right hand of God to reassume the full expression of divine authority, Peter quotes Psalm 110 saying, *"The Lord said to my Lord, sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool."* A few days after Pentecost the church in worship referenced Jesus' condemnation by Herod and Pontius Pilate to Psalm 2 which says, *"The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord and His Anointed."* One thing I couldn't find though was any reference to the psalm appointed for Pentecost Sunday, our text Psalm 25.

I've never used the appointed Psalm as a sermon text for Pentecost Sunday so I thought I'd give it a try. But try as I might I couldn't find any specific reference of this psalm to the life of Christ. Those other psalms I referenced would have been perfect for some aspect of Pentecost Sunday, but for some reason the Church through the lectionary chose Psalm 25. But as I thought of it, although Psalm 25 doesn't have any signs and wonders, any powerful outward manifestations of the Holy Spirit, it does have the most important manifestation of God in the world and in our lives, the forgiveness of sin. It may seem dull and commonplace. It may lack the display of the tongues of fire. It may seem boring compared with the wonder of hearing Galileans speaking perfect Arabic, Cyrenaic or Egyptian, but there is nothing more important than the forgiveness of sins. That's what its all about. That's where our relationship with God in Christ begins. Forgiveness in Christ is the foundation of faith. Forgiveness carries us through life. Forgiveness will bring us through death to stand in the presence of God in the resurrection of Christ.

It would have been amazing to feel the building shake when the Holy Spirit came upon the assembled believers. It must have dazzled the eyes to see the tongues of fire appear over everyone's head. To hear those Galileans speaking perfectly every language under heaven is not something you would easily forget. But with or without those amazing effects the most important thing was and is the forgiveness of sins, which Christ earned through His death, claimed through His rising and offers all to receive through the voice of the Church. No matter what you see, hear or experience, nothing is more important than the forgiveness of sins promised you in the gospel, given to you in baptism and holy communion. David sang, *"Consider my affliction and my trouble, and forgive all my sins."* The greatest trouble and

affliction we have is sin and our sinfulness. Whether or not we feel the need for forgiveness, whether we think of it not, we always need the forgiveness of sins. We always need the forgiveness God continuously offers and gives constantly to those who believe through the word and working of the Holy Spirit. Forgiveness of sin is the reason Jesus came into the world. Forgiveness of sin is the reason Jesus comes into our hearts. Forgiveness is the foundation of our relationship with God in Christ.

The proclamation of forgiveness is the purpose for which Christ created His church. Through the Church, Christ proclaims the forgiveness of His cross and calls people to faith that they may receive forgiveness and have life in Him for time and for eternity. The great signs of Pentecost got people to look and listen, so that Peter could tell the people who symbolically were from every nation under heaven, the most important things they needed to know, their sin and their Saviour. Peter stood up and said, *“Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth...delivered up according to the definite foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed.”* Truly it is our sins that crucified the Son of God. Repentance begins with seeing our sin and acknowledging our sinfulness. When the people saw their sin and confessed their sinfulness Peter proclaimed forgiveness saying, *“Repent and be baptized everyone of you in the name of Jesus for the forgiveness of your sins.”* The work of the church is to proclaim Jesus and call people to repentance that they may receive forgiveness and have life in His Name.

David begins Psalm 25 saying, *“To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul.”* David lifted his soul to the Lord, because he knew above all else and most importantly that the Lord was the God of his salvation. Apart from, above and beyond any of the blessings that come in time, the most important blessing in time and for eternity is God’s salvation which we experience as the forgiveness of sins. David prayed, *“Remember not the sins of my youth or my transgressions; according to your steadfast love remember me, for the sake of your goodness.”* God remembers us in forgiveness according to His steadfast love for the sake of His goodness in Christ Jesus. David had many sins, some of which are recorded for posterity in the scriptures. We all have sins, some known only to us, some known to others, all known to God. Human sin is the frame of Pentecost, our sin. Because of sin the world needs a Saviour. Jesus is the Saviour. He atoned for the sin of the world. Because of sin we all need a Saviour, even those who are in Christ Jesus. We never graduate from needing forgiveness, at least as long as we live in this life. It is the work of the Church, inspired and impelled by the Holy Spirit, to proclaim forgiveness of sin in Jesus’ Name, both to itself and to the world.

David concludes Psalm 25 praying, *“Redeem Israel, O God, out of all his troubles.”* The good news of Pentecost is that in Christ, God has redeemed Israel out of all his troubles in the forgiveness of sins. The good news of Pentecost is that this redemption is not simply for one people, the Jews of ancient Israel, but for all people, Jews and Gentiles. Jesus on the cross offered Himself as the sacrifice of atonement for sins of all people. Through the church He calls all people to Himself in faith to receive the forgiveness of their sins. Pentecost began on a Sunday long ago, but it continues in the world every day and will continue until the day Jesus returns on the clouds on the right hand of the Father. It is our blessed privilege both to believe in Jesus and to call others to faith in Him as their God and Saviour. Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord Jesus will be saved, not simply from the troubles and tribulations of life, but from our greatest enemies, sin, the devil and death. Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord Jesus has the blessing of Christ in their lives and the promise of sharing fully in Christ in His resurrection, when He returns and fulfills the work of Pentecost by making all things new. The Lord who has blessed us with forgiveness through Jesus by the word and working of the Holy Spirit, keep us in this grace unto life everlasting. In Jesus’ Name. Amen.